Order Number 9520542

School as community or school in community: Conflicting values in control and professional responsibility

Smith, Richard Jackson, Sr., Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL IN COMMUNITY: CONFLICTING VALUES IN CONTROL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

by

Richard Jackson Smith, Sr.

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1994

Approved by

David C Pugel

Dissertation Advisor

SMITH, SR., RICHARD JACKSON, Ed.D. School as Community or School in Community: Conflicting Values in Control and Professional Responsibility. (1994)
Directed by Dr. David E. Purpel. 405 pp.

The purpose of this research was to study (1) the dilemma of teachers' professional demands versus community expectations and (2) the issues regarding local control of schools versus centralization and the relationship between these two issues.

The history of a particular community is first presented, followed by historical research based on the revisionist works of Michael Katz, David Tyack and Carol Kaestle to reveal some of the origins and dimensions of the dilemma involved in professional versus community control.

Using the methodology of Alan Peshkin, who studied the effects of centralization upon a community, six retired community teachers and a school principal were interviewed. Following each interview, an interpretation was given. A collective analysis of the interviews was then presented.

This study concludes that the rise of the professionals, who have come to power to dominate educational decision-making for the past century, has eroded local communities' control over their schools. Local teachers are often in conflict between their

professional and community responsibilities, particularly in the area of merger or consolidation, for they see the community school, along with their families and their church, as an integral part of their community. Professionals tend to view schools as communities within themselves.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor David Puryear

Committee Members Richard Shore

John VanTassel

P. V. Lyon

10-6-94

Date of Acceptance by Committee

10-6-94

Date of Final Oral Examination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Background

Having grown up on a farm in the rural community of Westfield, North Carolina, located approximately 30 miles northeast of Winston-Salem, having attended its school as a student and spent my career as a teacher at Westfield School, I have been struck by the differences in the connection between the community members and its teachers and the relationships with agencies outside the community. This has evolved into my interest in the issues of community and professional involvement. My research will reflect those elements that are an integral part of my life. I, as well as others in the community, am defined by the reality that the school represents in that it is deeply connected to the people of Westfield.

Any history of the community of Westfield or Westfield School would necessarily begin with the Quakers or Friends who were among the earliest setters of the area, and most significant in the support of education in the community. Quaker settlers from Pennsylvania and New Jersey arrived around 1760 to settle in the area between Tom's Creek and Big Creek. My mother grew up on a farm

containing the headwaters of Tom's Creek and now lives with my father on their farm adjoining Big Creek.

These Friends were associated with the larger settlement at New Garden which is now Greensboro. From Quaker records at Guilford College it is noted that Thomas Beales (1719-1801), a minister, moved to Westfield and assisted in building up a large meeting around 1753. He lived at New Garden and moved to Westfield in 1781. Other records indicate that William Hill was ministering to Quakers in the area around 1761. These events occurred prior to the establishment of Surry County in 1770, and show that except for the Moravians of Wachovia, this is probably the oldest religious group in northwest North Carolina.

The meeting for worship was organized about 1771. As noted in the New Garden Monthly Meeting of Friends of August 8, 1772 "the Friends near the mountains request the indulgence of holding meetings on week-days among themselves." On May 29 of the following year, "Uriah Carson, an inhabiter of Toms Creek near the mountains, makes request to be joined in membership with Friends of this meeting, which is granted accordingly." Until this time Friends from the area had made annual trips through the Quaker Gap of the Sauratown Mountains in Stokes County to New Garden to join others from South Carolina and Georgia. Because this area was considered by the Friends

of New Garden to be a mission in their western field, the name "Westfield" was adopted; it was used first in 1786. Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held November 13, 1786 read: "the committee appointed last meeting to visit the Preparative Meeting of Toms Creek report [and] do give it as our sense and judgement that their request may be granted . . . and directs that the said meeting be held on the Seventh Day preceding the last seventh day in each month, also that it be known in the future by the name of Westfield." Thus the original Tom's Creek Preparative Meeting which had been attached to the New Garden Monthly Meeting was now established as the Westfield Monthly Meeting and included adjacent territory across the state line in Virginia as well as settlements in Greene and Jefferson Counties in Tennessee. The men's minutes from 1786 to 1828 including birth, death and marriage records are located in the Friends Historical Collection at Guilford College; however, the minutes for the women have been lost.

The following February, 1787, Joesph Jackson and Sarah Jessup "appeared at the meeting and declared their intention of marriage with each other." Thus the first couple to marry in the Westfield Friends Meeting were my great-great-great-great grandparents. The Jessup and Jackson families have the largest number of descendants today in the community. While researching some of this

information, I found that my parents share a common great-great-great grandfather, Elijah Jessup (c. 1860) and that his house is still occupied. All of my grandparents, and great-grandparents were born and lived within five miles of Westfield School. My ancestors have lived in this area for over 200 years. The last great-great grandparent to arrive, Albert Smith, the father of my Grandma Jackson's mother, was the last to arrive in the area from Patrick County, Virginia in 1865.

A deed on record in the Surry County Register of Deeds Office notes a plot of nine acres sold to the "Society of People called Quaker" on July 19, 1797. This plot included a "meeting house and a burying ground." This cemetery has been in continuous use for over two hundred years and is the final resting place of my grandparents, Eldridge and Maggie Jackson. Pa Jack was a life-long member of"Old Westfield," but faithfully attended Tom's Creek Primitive Baptist Church with Grandma Jack.

The first written evidence of education in the community comes from the minutes of the Westfield Meeting for 1817: "The importance of literary and virtuous instruction of our youth coming under consideration, . . . Joel Jessup, John Jackson, and John Carson are appointed to have care of schools in the future."

A wave of westward migration caused the meeting to be "laid down" or closed in 1828. I believe that this aided in the establishment of Tom's Creek Primitive Baptist Church in 1833, in which my great-grandfather and later my grandmother served as clerks. Many of the current residents attend the First Baptist Church of Westfield which was begun in 1870 and is located only across a field from Westfield School. Pastors at this church have included Dr. Tom Smith, who served on the local school board, and Rev. O.H. Hauser who served as the first principal in the current building.

In 1865 when Allen Jay, Superintendent of Schools under the Baltimore Association of Friends, visited Westfield and held a normal school for a few days. This is the first evidence of schooling I found since the church was closed. Jay later recruited Ellen Minthorne, an aunt of Herbert Hoover, to become a teacher. Books and salaries were furnished by Friends of the Association, and were free to the community. Records indicate that following the War Between the States, the Friends revived their meeting and "were desirous to build up a good and permanent school free for all to enter and also to hold and maintain religious meetings for worship, and to transact the business of the Society." From The Surry County Register of Deeds, it is recorded that in 1872, the trustees of Friends "paid one hundred and twenty-five

dollars for nine acres of land to be by them forever held for the use and benefit of said Society and not to be again disposed of in any way."

The school closed some time prior to 1915; it was attended by my grandfather who later purchased the building for use as a granary and it still stands today.

In 1884 Westfield Academy, a 18' x 24' building consisting of four rooms in two stories was built. Trustees included J.H. Lowe, Sam M. Flippen, John H. Hunter and Captain John L. Smith (my great-great grandfather). Smith's descendants still live in the home at the intersection of Old Westfield Road and Highway 89 across from Westfield Baptist Church. Capt. John's daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Simmons, extensively remodeled the building about 1902. Their great-granddaughter and her family now live there.

In 1916 a free school was established on the current site. This three-room frame building and later a two story white frame building were used until the present building was opened as Westfield High School for Grades 1-11 in 1929. Phyrus Jessup, and Dr. Tom Smith (my great-grandfather's brother) served on the school committee with Rev. O.H. Hauser as the first principal. Two additional classrooms were added in 1942, and a primary building was added in 1952. Members of the community provided most of the labor and materials to

construct an agricultural building the same year. A new gymnasium was opened in 1959, followed by a new cafeteria building in 1966. Westfield High School was consolidated with Pilot Mountain and Shoals in 1961 to form East Surry High. Since that time Westfield School has operated as a K-8 school.

I attended Westfield through grade nine and then graduated from the new East Surry High in 1964. I returned to teach at Westfield in 1967. At that time I was teaching with my former first-grade teacher, Mrs. Lena Smith (daughter-in-law of Dr. Tom Smith). My second-grade teacher was Mrs. Roxie Payne (first-cousin to my Grandmother Jackson) who taught my parents; she was church pianist and choir director for many years at Westfield Baptist. Ethel Christian, third-grade teacher, lived on one of the original Jessup farms and was married to Will Christian who after her death married Roxie Payne last year. Will's farm was a part of one of the original Jessup estates, including his first cousins: my Grandmother Smith's farm and the farm of her brother Bryan, who is married to my fourth-grade teacher, Aunt Vera Smith, who taught my parents. My seventh-grade teacher Mrs. Dellie Pell Owens (whose twin sister taught my parents) and her husband are related to my mother through both of her parents. My grandfather loaned the Pell twins funds to attend college. Their cousin Mrs.

Ersie Pell McIntyre served as my Elementary School Supervisor for several years. A number of the current teachers are graduates of Westfield High School. Richard Hauser, '56, the 7th- and 8th-grade math teacher and coach, is the son of the first principal in this building. The secretary, Iris Kuhl '55, is married to my father's first cousin, John Kuhl '55, who is also a nephew of Aunt Vera and grew up in her home. We were later joined by Sylvia Smith '60, first-grade teacher (our maternal grandmothers are sisters) who married another of my father's first cousins, Glenda Riddle '56, second-grade teacher, a niece of Ethel Christian and whose mother was a teacher's aide at Westfield. Glenda's husband teaches at East Surry and all three of her sisters are teachers. They are very active members of Westfield Baptist as is Rebecca Payne Smith '61, the fifth-grade teacher, and only child of Roxie Payne, who taught her daughter in second grade. Her home is across the road from Westfield Baptist Church on land that has been in her family for generations. All of the children of these current teachers attended Westfield School. Our most recent arrival is Diane Love Beane, third-grade teacher and my former sixth-grade pupil, whose father's farm adjoins my grandfather's. The current principal, Jim Jessup '60, to whom I am related through both my parents, grew up on his ancestral farm which is across Big Creek from my home place.

I have taught my sister in grades six and seven, a first cousin, a first cousin's son, numerous other distant cousins, relatives, neighbors, and peers' children growing up in the community. I was welcomed heartily by my former teachers when I returned from college to teach sixth grade in 1967. The fifth- and sixth-grade teachers had retired with nearly 40 years service each, in 1965. The sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Gladys Addison Jessup taught at Westfield for over 30 years. A native and graduate of Emory and Henry College, she married Frank Jessup, merchant, first chief of WVFD, son of P.H. Jessup, school committee chairman. I am related through my mother and father to both of Frank's parents. Their son, Add, is my oldest friend. I was welcomed not only as a returning former student, but as a young adult who was ready to assume a place of responsibility in the community. In a thousand subtle ways, these teachers all advised and assisted me as mentors in the true sense of the word, to become a successful teacher. Westfield School, then, is far more than a facility to acquire an education; it is an integral part of my life and the lives of others in the community.

Research on schools in transition is highly significant, as changes effect the quality of the community, and the issues of change are extremely important to people who strongly identify with their

community. This particular community with its people who have historic connections with one another is vitally important to me as a part of my professional and personal identity. An important phenomenon of this community is the school which ranks with the churches collectively as the most important institution in the community.

Westfield Community

One of the anomalies of Westfield is that a large part of the community lives in one county and attends school in another. The community is still geographically defined as it was by the Quakers over two hundred years ago as being between Tom's Creek of Surry County and Big Creek of Stokes County. The Westfield community is bisected by the Surry County and Stokes County line, with the school lying approximately 200 yards within Surry County. Eastern Stokes County has a common border with western Surry County. A community many be said to be defined by its people, but the Westfield community is legally separated into two halves - one in Stokes and one in Surry. Many of the students who attended Westfield School lived in Stokes County. In 1972, the Stokes County Board of Education notified the Superintendent of Surry County Schools, that those students who were residents of Stokes County would no longer be allowed to attend Westfield School.

The citizens affected were greatly aroused and sought legal advice through a parent who was a legal secretary for two attorneys in Winston-Salem. A meeting was held in the Westfield School auditorium to discuss the situation. At that first meeting the attorneys agreed to represent the parents in a suit against the Stokes County Board of Education for a fee of $3000.00. This was raised in checks and cash at that meeting that very night. At the trial in Superior Court in Danbury, the county seat of Stokes County, Judge James M. Long met with Richard Hauser, Aunt Vera, and Elsie Dearmin (whose son would be the first principal of Pilot Middle School) and members of the Stokes board in his chambers. Both parties agreed that all Stokes children who were currently attending Westfield Elementary School and East Surry High School would be allowed to continue, and that no longer would Surry County Schools buses be allowed to run in Stokes County. This agreement was hailed as a victory by many of the parents, who then provided the transportation for their children. In subsequent years the Stokes Board has intermittently refused to allow Stokes students to attend Westfield, and individual families have gone to court, and though always successful, have found the process expensive.

I was newly married in 1972 and moved to Pilot Mountain. My son was born in 1974 and rode with me to

attend grades K-8 at Westfield. I was unable to build a home on my father's farm or Grandpa Smith's farm in Stokes County, because of my fear that the Stokes Board would not allow my son to attend school at Westfield, and that the legal expense of approximately $5000.00 and uncertainty of the court ruling could not justify my desire to live on land that had been in my family for over two hundred years. Pa often asked me to survey a piece of land and build a home, as my first-cousin, the only other grandson had done, for he could not understand why I chose to live in Pilot Mountain. I had tended a tobacco crop as a teenager, which paid for my college expenses, on this land and wished to build a home on that plot. I remember once while I was in the field, my great uncle, Numa Christian, the brother of my great-grandmother, Emma Christian Smith, came by to talk while I was working, and told me that I would always have a good crop there, because that is where he raised his first crops. Uncle Nume was over 80 years of age at the time. This land was part of one of the Jessup estates and had come down through a great-grandmother and my grandmother. I was struck by the fact that I was working the same land that my ancestors had been farming for many generations.

My grandfather, Richard G. Smith died in 1981, and Grandma Annie died in 1982. My father and his brother consulted me about the possibility of my moving into their

home to be nearer to the family since my wife had also died in 1981. I was still unwilling to risk the legal ramifications of my son living in Stokes County and attending Wesfield School in Surry County, three miles away. The house was bought by Robert Smith, a student in my first class at Westfield and the son of Bryan and Vera who lived across Highway 89. He and his wife remodeled the 1927 house beautifully. They, along with other families sought legal assistance when they were denied a release from Stokes County when their first daughter reached age five in 1990. However, they were successful and both their daughters attend Westfield where Uncle Bryan or Aunt Vera picked them up in the afternoons. Robert is an English teacher who taught my son, and basketball coach at East Surry where his wife Sandy is a secretary. This uncertainty and legal maneuvering have been common with other families since 1972.

The net result of the situation has been that very few families have moved into the area of Stokes County that had formerly been a part of the Westfield School District. Those newcomers that have come have found it more convenient to allow their children to board Stokes County buses which now run in the community. Over the past twenty years, the enrollment of Westfield School has steadily declined. One of the principal reasons that the Surry County Board of Education wanted to consolidate.

Westfield Elementary with part of Pilot Mountain Elementary to create a new Westfield Elementary and Pilot Middle School and locate the new Westfield Elementary between Westfield and Pilot was not only for the convenience all the families involved, but also to move the school further from the Stokes County line.

There are other socially cohesive institutions in the Westfield Community. A Ruritan Club, a national organization for rural development, was formed about 1955 and from this club a community project developed to organize the Westfield Volunteer Fire Department in 1963; this gradually absorbed the members of the Ruritan Club. The many ham suppers and other fund raisers put on by the WVFD were supported and enjoyed by the community. For twenty years an annual WVFD Fiddler's Convention was sponsored at Westfield School. Approximately five years ago a Ruritan Club was again chartered.

The community was chosen by the state of North Carolina to have a rural health clinic in 1973. This facility was first served by a nurse practitioner in a van, but later a modern building was constructed following a visit from then-Governor Jim Holshouser. It has been self-supporting with a local board of directors.

The Westfield Post Office is located on the former site of Dr. Tom Smith's office, across Highway 89 from Westfield School. Dr. Tom's office is now used as a

precinct polling facility in the Frans Precinct on the Stokes County portion of Westfield, and was moved there by the first-cousins Will and Stanley Christian, father of the current postmaster, Grant Christian. Next to the post office is the Westfield Exchange building of the Surry Telephone Membership which has provided telephone service to rural areas of Surry and Stokes Counties since 1957.

The condition of the 1929 school building has declined considerably in the past few years. Many parents including have been instrumental in prodding the Surry County School central office to maintain the building. The rotting foundation, leaking roof, termites, bats, polluted water, heating problems, etc. brought an outcry from many parents who sought redress at the Surry County Board of Education meetings and in the media including newspapers in Mt. Airy, Pilot Mountain, and the television stations in Winston-Salem, High Point, and Greensboro.

In 1988, the very existence of Westfield School was threatened by reorganization into the Middle School concept. Again, I faced a dilemma as a professional, for as a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, I was enrolled in a class discussing and supporting this concept. I was appointed to serve on the Surry County Schools Middle School Task Force, with my professor serving as a consultant. This situation put my professional role as a teacher and student of education in

conflict with my identity with Westfield and its social and historical meaning for me. I was concerned, frustrated and ambivalent. As a professional educator, I could appreciate the increased educational opportunities, and the superior facilities at a new school. Nevertheless, I felt that the children would lose a vital link to their heritage. The effects upon the community itself were yet to be determined.

Because this issue was so important to me, I became determined to use it as a focus of my doctoral dissertation. As a professional, however, I fully realize that research has to be more than a personal inquiry since it must also have broader professional significance. I have sought, therefore, to examine the controversy over Westfield School within a broader research framework. Once again, I came to see how my personal interest could be translated into a body of valid research, and how that research can provide insight into my personal identity. Given my interest in the community, I have focused my research on two broad concerns. First, how did we arrive at a place where there is conflict between the professionals and the community, and secondly, how do people deal with such conflict?

This has led me to engage in broader historical and sociological research which ultimately led me to two theoretical perspectives that have guided my work. The

first is the revisionist historical work of Michael Katz, Carl Kaestle, and David Tyack. The other is the research of Alan Peshkin in community and education.

Historical Perspective

In the educational history of the United States, a traditional viewpoint has been one of linear, perpetual, progressive growth and improvement to widen both the opportunities and the horizons of education for more people; as democracy has increased, so has public education. The works of Cubberly (1934) and others saw the rise of the public school paralleling the rise of the republic; one of democratic ideals, progressivism, and humanitarian reform. In contrast to this traditional view, so-called revisionist historians such as Katz (1975), Tyack (1974), and Kaestle (1983) have produced research to indicate that public schools were actually imposed by the prominent upon the community. According to the revisionists, the goals of educational reform represented the imposition of upper- and middle-class prejudices, fears, and perceptions of social deficiencies. The content of educational reform represented the imposition of the values of communal leaders upon the rest of society. Far from being altruistic or humanitarian, the movement was seen to be principally one of indoctrination, in which its promoters sought to mold the balance of

society in their own image to the detriment of the community tradition.

Kaestle (1983) noted that from the earliest days of the nation until about 1830, local schooling was voluntary and widely accepted in a variety of settings. It only met with opposition from those who objected to the imposition of standards and financing set by the states. This became more evident in the rise of the common school reform movement of 1830-1860, when localists attempting to preserve their traditions of their communities, stood in opposition to the centralists who demanded reform through state mandate and professional regulation.

Localist opposition to centralization and state regulation is a social phenomena worthy of investigation and analysis. Indeed, the centralists argued that those who were opposed to centralization, supervision, new buildings, or graded schools must also be against morality, order, citizenship, prosperity, and the common culture. Revisionist research has shown that, to the contrary, localists were sane, logical persons who in the best tradition of their times sought to maintain local control and participation as a right earned through the establishment of the republic.

Viewed in the context of social class, revisionists have seen the movement as the clash between those who sought local control and local autonomy and those who

sought professional control by hegemony. The traditionalists have viewed professional control as a triumph of rationality and science, while the revisionists see it as a mask hiding the actual issue of power.

The common school reforms led by Horace Mann and others sought to bring the opportunities of education to all while at the same time being supported by the public. The reforms from about 1830 to 1860 have generally been interpreted as leading to schools that were tax-supported and universally free to all. Revisionists, in contrast, see schools that became larger, more uniform, more tightly organized and rigidly operated. The schools became centrally planned and directed in order to promote efficiency. Schools were saddled with principals, supervisors, school boards, and superintendents, who with education professors, became the heart of the bureaucratization of the public schools.

The revisionists have developed a critique of the reforms by Horace Mann and others and argue that the teaching of academic skills was secondary to the teaching of attitudes and the shaping of behavior to relieve social problems, and support the structure of society. According to Katz (1975), the morals of the students were of much greater importance to the reformers than their intellectual abilities.

School reform in the middle of the nineteenth century is thus viewed as a sociological phenomenon in which the socially elite, socially anxious, and status-seeking sought to mandate public schooling for their own interests. In this view, educational reform in this period was not prompted by a concern for the lower economic classes with a realization of the opportunities education afforded their young, but as a means whereby the upper classes could not only educate their young at public expense, but maintain social control as well. The movement described as "progressive education" is a reaction to the political corruption that occurred in the nineteenth century. Viewed in the context of social class, the movement was about the clash between those who sought local control and local autonomy and those who sought professional hegemony and centralized control of education. Within the agenda of the progressives was the hiring of teachers, and in particular a concern for the criteria and the process of selection. Progressives described locals, especially urban leaders, as corrupt dealers in machine politics (ward bosses, mayors and city councilmen) who used patronage to distribute teaching positions. Progressivism ushered in civil service, competitive examinations, and took control of hiring of teachers away from local politicians, in the name of fairness, honesty, and justice.

From another perspective, however, these locals could be seen as community leaders attempting to preserve the mores and customs of their districts and communities, particularly those with large immigrant populations. The hiring of teachers from the community, especially in non-English-speaking communities, was deemed necessary for those newly arrived members of subcultures. To many of these new Americans, the "common" school reforms hardly reflected their social agenda. They would, of necessity, trust those of their own old-country culture and language to facilitate their assimilation into the American mainstream. Immigrants looked to those who spoke their language and shared their customs to assist them in maintaining their identity in the face of the power structure.

The social, political, and economic evolution of the United States in the early national period had fostered the development of elementary schools, not as a result of state policy, but as a result of local custom. Schools were seen by most of the citizenry as providing only one part of a child's education. Social instruction was provided by the family, moral education by the church, and vocational training by apprenticeships. There was little opposition to mass education in the early republic due to several factors. There was no formal nobility or church hierarchy as in Europe to control the process.

There was a general notion that the common people had rebelled against the English oppression, and therefore there was no fear of a literate public to govern itself. Finally, the necessity of acculturation as immigration increased, focused the need for education.

From the early beginnings of the republic, the goal of most small, rural localities was to provide a minimal education under local control at the lowest possible cost. Prior to the common school movement beginning in the 1830s, no elementary schools existed that were entirely tax-supported or compulsory. Various forms of financing resulted in a myriad of types of schooling. The independent pay schools were perhaps the most numerous. In these schools the community contracted a teacher for a given salary and term. These were separate from "free schools" or "charity schools" to serve only the poor. Churches established charity schools for the poor, in addition to Sunday Schools for primarily religious instruction. Some schools were supported by apprenticeships which required some formal training. Academies might be supported by private fees and yet receive both a state charter for incorporation and state funds, and therefore be termed "public." A few infant schools based on English models were also attempted. These were aimed at children of poor, working mothers. They not only had religious and social bases, but also

explored the pedagogy of early childhood education and development of children from the toddler stage to about six years.

However, educational opportunity was uneven at best. The rudimentary, ungraded curriculum included the "3 R's," but it was informal and unsystematic, owing largely to the fact that the textbooks were provided by the parents with little uniformity. The subjects taught were decided by the parents, especially through the books they had available. The subjects reflected such norms as the local religious standards as well as the local speech. The quality of the teachers varied greatly from school to school. Both the length of the school day and the school terms were diverse, even within the same school. Financing was problematic, and might be tuition-based, with or without community or state assistance from taxes.

Pedagogy was limited to rote memorization and recitation. Lancasterian or monitorial system, in which older students tutored the young, was the most popular educational reform in the Americas. This model emphasized recitation, competition, regimentation, self-pacing, and perhaps most importantly, efficiency; one master might conduct a school of several hundred students. Because of the low cost and east of implementation, charity schools first adopted this system which was then rapidly spread to the common schools of the nation.

The school buildings, although nostalgically remembered as "the little red schoolhouse," were often substandard, even by local standards. Most often they were one-room, one-teacher affairs, with slab benches for the students, a pot-bellied stove in the center, and perhaps a chalkboard on one wall. Their location was often a source of contention as members debated the distance from various community residents' homes. Often isolated on poor farmland, the school buildings were valued as much by the community for their usefulness for social, political, or religious meetings as for their educational purposes.

The student populations varied widely. There were few age requirements. Children as young as two or three might attend as well as students whose ages approached that of the teacher. Generally, students from about ages 5 or 6 attended until about the age of 10 or 12, or until they were needed on the farm. Both sexes attended, but girls generally were in greater attendance in the spring or summer sessions, while boys, who were needed to plant and harvest the crops, were in greater attendance in the winter sessions. These sessions rarely lasted more than two or three months. Weather was also a factor in voluntary daily attendance.

Because the older boys attended more frequently during the winter months, the teachers were more likely to

be male during these sessions, as males were thought to be more able to discipline their charges. Although, most teachers were male, female teachers tended to predominate during the spring and summer sessions when more girls attended. There were few requirements for the selection of teachers, who often were not academically accomplished much above their pupils. Because the length of terms varied widely, as did the salary, turnover was large. Parents controlled the selection of teachers as well as the length of the school term.

Local schools were closely linked to their communities. Relatively cheap to operate and controlled closely by the localities they served, they satisfied the educational criteria for most of white rural America. Enrollment rates nevertheless did rise during the first half-century of independence as the local school system spread and the inclusion of females both as pupils and teachers increased. This progress was largely the result of the importance of educated leaders in a Protestant republic, the value of literacy in the new republic which saw great increases in the use of the written word, improved transportation, a growing and more diverse economy, and the discipline required in the young republic's leadership to balance political freedom with mobility, immigration, and capitalist expansion.

"By 1830 schools were available to most white Americans in the North. Enrollment rates were lower in the South, but comparisons are made difficult by lack of detailed information about the unregulated schooling typical of this period. In the North, rural district school enrollment became almost universal, and throughout the nation, charity schooling for the urban poor was advocated with little opposition and with increasing organizational vigor. Locally controlled, voluntary elementary schooling was a common feature of life in most American communities by 1830. Most states, both North and South, had little legislation on elementary schooling and offered little or no financial assistance to localities. In many communities, school sessions were brief, facilities were crude, and teachers were only a few steps ahead of their pupils. Uniformity was provided only by the popularity of certain textbooks, and by informal traditions of school architecture. America had schools, but except in large cities, America did not have school systems" (Kaestle, 1983, p. 62).

Although some efforts were made in various states to implement state-wide schooling, the aversion to taxes, demand for local control, and confidence in the current system were contributing factors to the inability of the states to extend public education prior to 1830.

These factors, along with the tremendous increase in population due to immigration after 1830, brought about the rise of the common school reform movement, which was based upon the ideology of the native Protestant American, upon which Kaestle centers on republicanism, Protestantism and capitalism and described in ten strands:

1. The sacredness and fragility of the republican polity including ideas about individualism, liberty, and virtue was advocated by the Whig party which proposed government action to integrate the capitalist economy, centralize public direction, and improve communications, with one common moral and political culture based upon native American Protestantism, republicanism, and capitalism. Opposing these centrists and their support of state regulation were the Democrats, or localists, who saw as most important the proposition that only through local control and political participation could the sacred and fragile republican form of government be kept.

2. The importance of individual character in fostering social mobility was included in the Republican belief. For the Protestant ideology, this meant the stress on unity, obedience, restraint, and self-sacrifice, all of which were to be reflected in the educational system. Because all individuals needed moral training, its lessons were not only for the poor or the wayward, but for everyone.

3. The central role of personal industry in defining rectitude and merit was related to the virtues of self-sacrifice and restraint, which coupled with industry and hard work could eliminate poverty in the republic with proper training.

4. The delineation of a highly respected but limited domestic role for women including the husband, children, and homemaking which were reflected not only in the literature, but in the curriculum as well.

5. Character building of familial and social environment was espoused within certain racial and ethnic limitations.

6. The sanctity and social virtues of property were necessary for social stability in rural America. The availability of land and education represented an equal opportunity for all to share in America's riches.

7. Central to the ideology were the equality and abundance of economic opportunity in the United States, which however, was limited to native white males. Social or economic mobility was not nearly so important as the emphasis on the teaching of morality, especially to the poor and working classes.

8. The superiority of Protestantism was not only one of a litany of propositions of the native Protestant culture; along with republicanism and capitalism, it was a

central tenet, regardless of the other values also shared by Catholics and Jews.

9. A penultimate ideological tenet was the belief in the unique grandeur of America's destiny to lead western civilization to greater progress.

10. Finally, a determined public effort was needed to unify America's population, chiefly through education, for cultural assimilation.

The need for common school schooling was itself a central tenet of the native Protestant ideology. The common proposals of reformers included (1) centralized supervision, (2) tax-support, (3) teacher-training, and (4) consolidated school districts with new buildings and graded schools. But above all else, the reformers' most important goal for common education was morality, especially moral teaching that would help to reduce deviant behavior and crime and produce virtuous citizens, based on Christianity. The teaching of character, discipline, virtue, and good habits were of a higher priority than the teaching of academic skills.

The common school reform program sought more schooling for each child, more state involvement, more uniformity, and a more pervasive public purpose for schooling. The reformers sought free schooling, improved facilities, better classification, longer school terms and

better teacher training, improved attendance, and more parental support.

The reformers' challenge to locally controlled schools met the largest opposition. Reformers characterized these small districts as having led to the hiring of poor teachers, uninhabitable buildings, and sparse equipment due to lack of funds from opposition to self-imposed taxation. Innovation and an equalization of the distribution of wealth were arguments used to support consolidation.

In the 1840s union schools were characterized by the consolidation of several small schools, grading of pupils, more advanced instruction, and larger, more homogeneous classes. Cities were not as resistant to consolidation as were rural areas where distances from schools were the principal issues of the localists' opposition. The common-school reformers sought to use state funds to develop state educational agencies to be headed by a state superintendent. In addition to consolidation and state control to centralize the common school systems, the reformers also fought private schooling. The school reformers of the antebellum period used the term "common school" to be synonymous with "free schools" to draw all children. High schools were developed, beginning in the cities, as a part of the reformers' goals of a hierarchical, graded, coordinated

system of schooling. The introduction of grades to the local schools was a direct challenge to its traditional structure. This stratification sought to shift the cooperative learning of the school into one which fostered competition among students of like ages. Similarly, uniformity and innovation were encouraged, especially in the use of textbooks, which had often been supplied haphazardly by the parents. In the antebellum period, reformers called for more uniformity, not diversity.

Female teachers were hired in increasing numbers, not only because they could be hired more cheaply than males, but because they would encourage a more tender, loving pedagogy, especially with younger children. Later a male supervisor, or principal, was hired for the overseeing of the school itself.

Longer terms, better wages, improved teacher training through normal schools, more communication through journals and organizations, and improved hiring practices were all sought by the common school reformers "to bring a measure of consistency and quality to a collection of local institutions that the reformers considered uneven and largely inadequate. Theirs was a program of assimilation, centralization, and standardization, a program of government encouragement and organization designed to make public education in different communities increasingly similar as well as more

substantial, and to make schooling more responsive to the political, economic, and cultural tasks that Anglo-American Protestant leaders believed were necessary to preserve and improve their society. On the purposes of common schooling there was much popular agreement, and when they argued for their innovations, school reformers invoked the necessity of universal schooling in a republic of diverse peoples. There was less agreement on the specific proposals of the reformers. They encountered inertia and resistance on matters of centralized control, nonsectarian religion, full tax support for common schools, and the establishment of new institutions like high schools and normal schools. Nonetheless, they had achieved many of their objectives by 1860 in the North . . ." (Kaestle, 1983, p. 135).

Many of those who opposed centralized control were in a minority, disorganized, and independent in orientation. For various reasons, they argued against consolidation and the public tax support of education. They argued on the basis of tradition, parents' prerogatives, minority rights, religious freedom, and theories of limited government. Because of their smaller numbers, emphasis on differing issues, and geographical dispersement, they were able only to delay the reformers.

The Democratic Party favored local control and equal opportunity, while the Whigs favored organized state

systems and stressed public morality and social stability. However, there were degrees of support for each of these issues within each party. The Democrats' favoring of egalitarianism and the Whigs' assimilitation aspect with respect to immigrants, helped the reformers in the North to achieve their goals: to professionalize, homogenize, and organize common schools.

Still, localists could resist the all-Protestant approach; not only Catholics, but other Protestant groups as well wanted their sectarian religious views kept in their schools. The local-control tradition left much of the responsibility for schooling to the parents. Parents decided when and for how long their children would attend, and they paid partial tuition costs. Parents had great influence over the hiring, retention, and behavior of teachers. In general, however, parents in nineteenth-century America wanted schools to take custody of their children, and they wanted schools to train their children in basic skills and attitudes. The eventual price that they paid was the loss of authority and control over their children's education. Parents' acquiescence in the loss of control and involvement in schooling was often reluctant, but ultimately it was insured by the schools' promise to confer opportunity and status.

By 1860, the reformers still had not seen state or county supervision through superintendents; most teachers

did not have professional training or journals, and corporal punishment was still widely used. However, more time and money were being spent on formal education. Longer and more regular sessions were being held. Local committees visited the schools and often required annual reports. Women were increasingly hired as teachers. More free schools were established. Centralized control and standardization at the state levels were beginning. Conformity was increasing while diversity was discouraged, as cultural assimilation was stressed.

Rural schools were generically viewed as problematic by reformers in the 1890s who continued their efforts with mounting fervor into the beginning of the present century. Several specific areas were identified for improvement, especially the curriculum, selection of teachers, supervision, student discipline, facilities and equipment. However, these were only symptomatic of the deeper and more central issue: rural citizens wanted to operate their own schools, but did not understand the process required in an increasingly complex society (Tyack, 1974, p. 21).

> Because the rural school is today in a state of arrested development, burdened by educational traditions,lacking in effective supervision, controlled largely by rural people, who, too often, do not realize either their own needs or the possibilities of rural education, and taught by teachers who, generally speaking, have little comprehension of the rural-life problem . . . the task of reorganizing and redirecting rural

> education is difficult, and will necessarily be slow. (Cubberly, 1934, pp. 105-106)

The reformers saw a nostalgic rural America being shaped by industrialism, urbanism, and immigration, as fewer native Anglo-Saxons actually farmed, and more tenants worked the land. As more of the youth sought opportunities in the cities, the rural communities were seen by the reformers as being in a state of decay. The reformers sought to arrest this decline through a reformed school system, and their principal goal was for the professionals to run the school systems. Professionals on the National Education Association Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools in 1912 sought to consolidate the schools and student transportation, "take politics out of the schools," seek professionally trained teachers, who could relate the life of the community with the curriculum to teach moral values and vocational trades in a modern, homogenized community to be supervised by the professionals.

Thus began the process of the transfer of power from the lay community to the professionals that has continued to the present day. The trend toward an increasing bureaucratization of the schools was growing rapidly in the cities and at the end of the last century and was being sought in the rural areas as schools were coerced into consolidating. The reformers sought to

reduce the number of one-room school houses. Tyack notes that from 1910 to 1960, the number was reduced from 200,000 to 20,000 (Tyack, 1974, p. 25). Not only were improved buildings sought, but an updated and enlarged curriculum, with professionally trained teachers and supervisors, could provide a standardized school system across the nation in which rural youth would receive a more cosmopolitan education for entry into modern society.

Alford (1960) found that this consolidation and uniformity were fought in many rural areas. In 1921, 65% of rural New York State citizens wanted to directly elect their county superintendents, while 69% opposed unification. Similar results were found in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Idaho. Seldom did the initiative for reorganization of the schools come from within the rural community; in nearly all cases, the drive for reforms was imposed upon the community from outside professionals. The graded school, the standardization of the curriculum, the district system, the hierarchy of teachers, principals, and supervisors with superintendents at the local and state levels were all established in the public school bureaucracy by the end of the nineteenth century. The development of the educational bureaucracy allowed superintendents to seek to professionalize their roles. Katz, in Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools (1975) noted that superintendents used the bureaucracies to develop career

line within their educational systems and to regulate behavior within the occupation itself. According to Katz, superintendents looked to industrial methods as a way of dealing with ever more complex administrative problems, political intrusion, and the need to organize and manage large numbers of employees with differentiated functions.

The professionalization of the educational administrators and their alignment with influential businessmen and university officials presented a major shift in the focus of public education in the twentieth century. The modern school bureaucracy emerged as educators emulated factories and businesses. This process produced a professionalized educational administration and new forms of educational control emerged. The hierarchical and bureaucratic organization for school administration became more clearly defined as the roles of the school principal and superintendent became more professionalized.

Tyack maintained that a professional elite was driving educational reform from the top down between 1890 and 1920. "At that time an interlocking directorate of urban elites--largely business and professional men, university presidents and professors, and some 'progressive' superintendents--joined forces to centralize control of the schools. They campaigned to select small boards composed of 'successful' people, to employ the

corporate board of directors as the model for school committees, and to delegate 'experts' (the superintendent and his staff) the power to make most decisions concerning the schools. Part and parcel of urban 'progressivisim' generally, this movement glorified expertise, efficiency, and the disinterested public service of the elites" (Tyack, 1974, p. 7). Thus, this period of reform was seen by Tyack as one in which centralization was based upon the corporate model. Reformers frequently saw the school boards, superintendents, principal, teachers, and students as analogous to the board of directors, CEO, plant manager, workers, and consumers. Other historians, such as Merle Curti (1959), have argued that schools were brought under the influence of the corporate elite to meet its social and economic interests. Local communities were not always passive to the business and professional educators' attempts to take control of the schools. William Reese (1959) in Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements during the Progressive Era has studied three school systems in which communities successfully sought to have local interests met through the school system. John Dewey, in an address to the 1902 National Education Association convention stressed the role of the school in the community as a public place and a community social center.

Indeed, the tremendous growth of industrial capitalism with its accompanying material gain and prestige had an inevitable impact upon the public schools. The consolidation of industrial wealth had its corollary in the centralization of the schools. Reformers sought to apply business principles to the organization of the schools. One of the earliest and most influential examples was the time-and-motion studies of Frederick Taylor and his system of scientific management which sought to organize the schools more efficiently, particularly in the areas of hierarchical management and cost efficiency in order to standardize all areas of schooling.

Efficient management of the schools led to the creation of smaller school boards in order to "keep education out of politics" by having nonpartisan community members who were often the business, financial, professional, and social elite to keep the schools from being controlled by local and state politicians. Their mission of establishing policy and allowing the professional administrators to handle the implementation and day-to-day responsibilities greatly increased the power of the administrators.

Administrators were first influenced by these principles as they sought to meet criticism of the schools' performance by increasing their visibility,

expertise, and control of the schools by modeling their supposed counterparts in the business world. Raymond Callahan (1962) in Education and the Cult of Efficiency presents school administrators as seeking to apply more business-like methods to the schools while ignoring their roles as philosophers, curriculum experts, and instructional leaders. Although administrators were vulnerable in terms of job security, and business influences were great, these two factors alone could not have led to the professionalization of education without the cooperation and support of the universities. By providing the research and training of educational leaders, the new graduate schools of education became the centers of professional control. Callahan (1962) noted that school administrators not only gained prestige through university degrees, but were greatly influenced by such educational administration professors as Spaulding, Bobbitt, Ayers, Elliot, Stayer and Cubberly. These professors not only trained the new superintendents in financial, organizational, and technical problems, but shaped the field of professional educational administration that still has a significant influence upon American schools today.

The nineteenth century was one in which professionalism came to power and since that time it has become, if not dominant, then certainly a significant part

of educational decision-making. The professional educators' fight for power among themselves and with the business, political, and community leaders with shifting alliances among various economic, political, and social power bases, have characterized the politics of American education in the twentieth century. As Michael Katz has proposed as his central proposition in Class, Bureaucracy and Schools (1975) the basic structure of American Education has been fixed by about 1880 and it has not altered fundamentally since that time. "The essential characteristics, he pointed out, of being "universal, tax-supported, free, compulsory, bureaucratic, racist, and class-biased, remain the same today as a century ago" (p. xx).

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

The historical research revealed some of the origins and dimensions of the dilemma involved in professional versus community control. The specific situation of Westfield School within this historical framework suggests a closer examination of the views and concerns of at least some of those involved.

Given the above discussion of my passion for the land, the history, the family, the relationships and all of these connections that are so much a part of me, I was delighted to find the work of Alan Peshkin. While I am tied to the community, at the same time I am a professional and do have concerns about providing a sensible and solid educational program. Therefore, my research had to be sensitive to my concerns both as a professional educator and as a native of the community. Peshkin's methods have allowed him to see both dimensions and has put language and form to my concerns.

Alan Peshkin has written subtly and elaborately on the issues of centralization versus local control and professional development versus community. Peshkin's interest in the relationship between a community's schools

and community survival led him to do research for Growing Up American (1978) which is a case study of an American High School. He followed this work with The Imperfect Union: School Consolidation and Community Conflict (1982). Both works use similar methods of study: extensive interviews, the participant-observer technique, observation at meetings, studying school board minutes, newspapers and other materials.

One of the approaches that Peshkin utilizes is the process of coming to know people, and being concerned with them. Peshkin seeks individual and personal perspectives that are often diverse, but are always specific. By hearing many voices one can come to know more fully the issues involved in central and local control, and community and professional involvement.

My heritage of growing up in the Westfield community gives me a valuable dimension of community life. Part of my culture is the value that I value that I place on the process of people coming to know and value and rely upon each other, largely through conversations. Thus I am drawn to Peshkin's method rather than other kinds of social science surveys. Peshkin talked personally to individuals as I would talk to a member of my community in the effort to derive a sense of how they think. Because I value understanding, compassion and, empathy, I find his work compatible with my subculture; and at the same time

it represents a professionalism because these conversations involve a rigorous methodology and a powerful conceptual analysis.

The Imperfect Union focuses on the social and psychological aspects of the conflict between local schools and consolidation in an Illinois rural school district undergoing reorganization. It describes the chronology of the district from the end of World War II, through years of conflict and chaos, to a relative peace in 1977. Peshkin conducted extensive interviews with two community members who supported the community school, and a school board member and superintendent who favored consolidation. The final chapter provides an interpretation of the events and gives explanations for their causes; the community is explained in light of seven key concepts: boundaries, integrity, the community school, consolidation and centralization, loss and secession.

Boundaries of differing kinds enclose the lives of the citizens of Unit 110. Some inspire little emotion such as those of the telephone or fire department service, or voting districts. Others are more informal and personal such as those of one's religion, medical care, food, and recreation.

Peshkin noted that integrity is not so easily defined as geographical districts, but can be more easily

seen as a community responds to a problem, or even perceives a situation as a problem. Essential to the integrity of a community is its sense of survival. The integrity of a community recognizes its boundaries, but as a virtue it may grow or diminish.

Peshkin discussed how the community school effects the members of the community through the school building, it's operational and it's symbolic functions. The plant and its campus are part of the collective consciousness of many members of a community, not only physically, but nostalgically remembered. The school's operational functions reflect the community's values and act upon the life of the community as the school calendar and activities occur. Loyalty and pride in a school, especially those growing from school teams or organizations, often help to identify those virtues within the community itself.

The symbolic functions of the school are identified by Peshkin as community autonomy and vitality. Although most communities may perceive control over their school, most schools are governed by an elected district school board which is mandated by state laws to conduct the schools within its district. Although a school may have an advisory council made up of local parents and community leaders, such a council has no legal standing. Therefore, community autonomy is often but an impression among its

members. Nevertheless, a community may define its well-being in terms of its institutions that are functioning such as the post-office, fire department, churches, medical facilities, businesses, etc. Certainly the ability to operate a school within its boundaries is a reflection of a community's sense of vitality. A school is often the central focus of a community and thus tends to give a commonality and integration to the community members. Parents of school children especially feel that they can influence the education of their children in a local school. However, the intimacy perceived diminishes as the physical distance from school increases. Even the traditions of a community often revolve around the school calendar and especially its extracurricular activities. Traditions form a bond among the several generations of a community.

Consolidation involves the combining of two or more schools or school systems and generally the closing of one or more schools with its students having to attend a school outside the community. It is defined by having all or part of a system in a central location. Centralization always involves some consolidation, but consolidation does not require centralization.

Those who feel a sense of loss at the closing of their school perceive its meaning in terms of personal identity, or real estate values, but often they are joined

by others in a collective grief. The meaning of a school closing is explained by designating objects as "structures of meaning." Not only is a building or program lost, but an integral part of one's life is gone:

> I am concerned with the organized structures of understanding and attachments, by which grown people interpret and assimilate their environment. I have called these 'structures of meaning,' because in everyday language 'meaning' can include a sense of attachment as well as understanding, as when we say something 'means a great deal' to someone. (Peter Marris quotation. Peshkin, p. 170)

Several residents of Unit 110 sought secession when their school was threatened with closing; they fought for detachment for almost four years, serving to alienate the litigants from other residents of Unit 110.

Peshkin (1982) has provided not only valuable insight into the issues of local versus central control and community versus professional involvement, but also a very valuable research framework. With The Imperfect Union he has provided the focus, substantively and methodologically, for my research:

> What was important for me was to tell the story that seemed most worth telling and then to explore what it means in human terms . . . . At one level, this book relates the story of Unit 110, its decision to close Killmer's school, and how why Killmer so strenuously resisted this decision. At another level, it illuminates issues that transcend the particular . . . . These issues include (1) the nature of communities and their boundaries; (2) the nature of the school union that is created when several previously separate school districts are

> consolidated into a single district; (3) the behavior of communities in conflict over school affairs; and most important, (4) the meaning of a school to a community . . . . It is one village's response to these concerns of security and certainty which constitutes the central focus of this book. (Peshkin, 1982, pp. 18-19)

The issue that Peshkin has not addressed, but which, using his approach I would like to study, is the particular issue of teacher loyalty or teacher identity. This issue can be depicted by dramatizing the conflict with a 2 x 2 cell such as the one below:

	Professional Ethos	
	High Community	Low Community
High Profession	1. Hp, Hc	2. Hp, Lc
Low Profession	3. Lp, Hc	4. Lp, Lc

This cell can help to identify professionals broadly in terms of the degree of identification with their profession (High or Low) in comparison with their perceived relationship (High or Low) to the community.

1. Teachers in group one (Hp, Hc) would be highly committed to the profession and the community. These might be those who live and teach in the community. I

would expect to find the greatest conflict between these two areas within these individuals.

2. Teachers in group two (Hp, Lc) are highly committed to the profession, but not to the community. These are the teachers who live outside the community.

3. Teachers in group three (Lp, Hc) put little emphasis on the profession, in relation to the importance of the community. I would expect these individuals to be more rare, but have greater conflict than the previous group. They do not want a new middle school. Their small numbers and lack of voice speaks to the power of the profession.

4. Teachers in group four (Lp, Lc) have little commitment either to their profession or to the community. This rather inert group would probably exhibit little or no conflict.

Using the model above, I am particularly interested in learning about teachers who are as closely as possible reflected in Group 1, for they would exhibit the greatest conflict and most powerful dilemma. Using a similar model on the following page, I am also very interested in learning about community members who tend to be in agreement (High or Low) with the educational professionals and yet also identify with community values (High or Low).

Community Ethos

	High Community	Low Community
High Profession	1. Hp, Hc	2. Hp, Lc
Low Profession	3. Lp, Hc	4. Lp, Lc

1. Citizens in group one (Hp, Hc) would favor the experts in education and have a traditional outlook. They would exhibit a high degree of respect in terms of educational criteria and a great commitment to the maintenance of community control. Long time members of the community would be represented here.

2. Members of group two (Hp, Lc) don't care as much about the community as in having the best possible schools and professional standards. These would likely be outsiders, transients, or other marginal groups.

3. Those in group three (Lp, Hc) aren't as interested in the experts' views, but want to maintain traditions. Probably the largest number of community residents, more likely the older generations, would be represented here.

4. The last group (Lp, Lc) would include those who aren't interested in either the school or the community.

It is recognized that this diagram polarizes individuals into low or high categories only, but this model allows identification of the subject for inquiry in these broad categories. Presumably, there are community people and professionals caught in a dilemma, and at the same time, for some there is little or no dilemma at all.

In order to know more about the significance of the school to the community, it was necessary to understand and interpret the shared beliefs, folk knowledge, and behaviors of the people of the Westfield Community, using a fresh approach, and different methods to demonstrate their unique exceptionalities. Interpretive research starts with how people make sense of their world. Interpretive inquiry is not just psychological inquiry, but seeks to understand the culture by seeing how people think or feel, which is the essence of culture. All interpretive inquiry comes from a capacity to tell stories. Critical inquiry allows people's stories to be heard. It starts with the assumption that many people do not have the opportunity to be heard. Part of the goal of this project will be to enable people of the community a chance to speak, i.e., to ask them directly how they felt about the moving of the school. Paulo Freire noted that people have to be able to name their own world. This inquiry will encourage certain individuals to speak of their own experiences.

Other sources examined included papers of former teachers, records at the Surry County Register of Deeds Office, minutes from the Westfield Friends Meeting from the late eighteenth century at Guilford College, records of the Surry County Historical Society and the Surry County School Board. This research echoes Heidegger who noted that history changes the present, for our history is affected by where we are at the present time.

I had to assume a role or position as I examined these sources. Was I only a "researcher", or did I act as a member of the Westfield School community myself? It was not possible for me to conduct this research without my own subjectivity becoming involved, as I have grown up, attended school, and taught school in the community, as have my ancestors for two centuries. Indeed, sustained interaction with participants is noted by some researchers as a criterion for labeling a study ethnographic. The research questions that investigators formulate are influenced implicitly or explicitly by their personal experiences or philosophies that shape their interests and thinking. Therefore this research will inevitably be seen through my lens, which will be the reason it is important to me. Polyani noted that personal knowledge is the beginning of all inquiry.

Finally, the data had to be analyzed relevant to my focus. The goal of critical inquiry is to make the

familiar strange and the strange familiar, to make it all visible. Perhaps going after a problem is not as important as seeing the world in which we live. Research should enable seeing what is there, for only then can things be changed.

While Peshkin's research approach has been heavily relied on, I have added something absent from his work, namely, a historical perspective. While guided by revisionists' concerns such as Katz's basic hypothesis that the basic educational system has remained the same for over a century to be verified from my own research in the community school, I have discussed professional responsibility as opposed to community membership, in the history of American education, and local as opposed to central control.

Research these two broad areas revealed material that was mutually explanatory. Rather than studying the process of theory into practice or vice versa, I have studied the interaction between the theory and the practice and how each helps to explain the other. Because I have come to a better understanding of school reorganization by studying the general historical and sociological issues, through study of the merger, the notion of professional vs. public has become more complex. The particular has helped me to understand the general and the general has helped me to understand the particular,

i.e., a circle in which I will be operating simultaneously. This issue of a specific school closing and reorganization has attributes that are unique; at the same time, it has characteristics that are common to other situations. It is within this praxis that I have gained insight into both the theoretical and the applied.

The dissertation is designed to bring more insight into the problem of the conflicting responsibilities of the citizen professional and the issue of public versus central control. It raises the issue of power, i.e., who runs, controls, and owns the schools: the community or the professionals? What occurs when teachers are both members of the profession and the community? I represent that conflict. As a member of the education profession I have been trained to act and think accordingly, but as a member of the community, I hold some community values more important than professional tenets.

In addition, I hoped that my research would provide some insight into some historical issues. Katz, Tyack and Kaestle have developed the thesis that progressive education reflects the triumph of the profession over the public. Within the context of my study, several research questions have emerged:

1. What is the nature of communities and their boundaries?

2. What is the behavior of communities in conflict over school affairs?

3. What is the meaning of a school to a community?

4. What happens when the people involved have dual loyalties of being members of both the community and the profession?

5. How do teachers react when their loyalties conflict?

These questions can be reduced to two principal issues: (1) the dilemma of teachers' professional demands vs. the community expectations and (2) local control vs. centralization and the relationship between these two issues.

It is my responsibility as a researcher to make my own position as clear as I can on these matters. It is important not only to express my views to meet this duty, but also for the fact that obviously the interviews and my interpretations of them in the next chapters were filtered through my lens. Here I present the views before I conducted this study.

The issue of teachers' professional demands versus the community expectations in terms of my views is best demonstrated in the Stokes County affair. This conflict clearly represents a dilemma in which the professionals, the Stokes County Board of Education and its administrators attempted to remove the Stokes County

children from Westfield School. I personally contributed $100.00, as did Aunt Vera, my parents and others, to retain attorneys to represent the parents in opposing the school board. I spoke with Representative Worth Gentry, our representative in the North Carolina House of Representatives and a long-time leader in Stokes County, on many occasions at his home, at Westfield School and in Raleigh to seek his influence to mediate the problem. I attended the many sessions held with the attorneys in the school auditorium and the final court hearing in Danbury, NC. In this instance, when many of my friends and relatives' children, as well as my youngest sister, were being threatened with removal from Westfield School. I chose to oppose the professionals and support the community. Therefore, I wish to make clear that I support the local school concept, with its implied local autonomy, in this particular case.

My personal views on the issue of local control versus centralization are exemplified in the school reorganization which ultimately removed the school from the community. I voluntarily served on the Surry County Schools Task Force for Middle Grades Education and, as an elective, took a class at UNCG discussing middle grades education with my program chairman who was also serving as a consultant to the task force. As I stated earlier, my personal views and my professional views came into

conflict. Certainly I wanted to see a new modern facility built for our community and its students. However, I wished for the school to be built in the community and, ideally, on the same campus.

Nevertheless, I gave my full support and energies to the task force. I attended many workshops, contributed to the final draft, and spoke in support of the middle-grade concept to other educators and parents on both formal and informal occasions.

It soon became apparent that a new Westfield School would be tied to a package to Mountain Elementary whose students were equally divided to attend new facilities at Westfield and Shoals. I supported the plan, for only by this compromise could a new facility be built with county-wide support. This view was not held by a majority of voters in Westfield or Pilot Mountain who voted against the bond referendum, although the vote passed county-wide.

For thirty-nine years, from the age of five until the age of forty-four except for six years at high school and college, I was at Westfield School as a student or teacher. Although we lived outside the district, I took my son for grades K-8 with me to Westfield School. I strongly believed that the community values inherent in Westfield School and its community, particularly the spirit of family and tradition, would not be replicated easily at a larger albeit more modern facility. When I

began my research, I had little knowledge of the history of the rise of the bureaucracy of our current school systems, but I have always believed that in North Carolina, at least, the curriculum and most major policy decisions are made in Raleigh and filtered down through the Local Education Agency to the local schools.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

Background

Rationale

Because this dissertation is based upon a variety of kinds of research, an explanation of the relationship between these modes and the interviews is necessary. I have discussed a specific community, presented both a historical and a theoretical perspective to seek an understanding of the whole issue of communities and schools to gain some insight into a mode of research as reflected by Peshkin's interviews. From my work in Chapter I, I have a general notion of the history and the background of the community, but still lack systematic data of individual experiences. I am interested in how these specific people interpret and experience this historical perspective. The interviews give a particular insight into the lives of the particular people involved in this study. History tends to be written very descriptively and broadly and thus tends to flatten the experiences of individual people. I have sought to gain a sense of the texture and specifics of some of the individual experiences. Therefore, my research using

broader modes of historical and educational studies, together with particular interviews, may be seen as a dialectic between the general and the concrete.

The effort to systematically obtain the ideas and interpretations of the individuals involved in the Westfield merger would give me further insight and a better understanding of both the theoretical issues and the specific events. To supplement other modes of research, following Peskin, I believe it would be valuable to interview some of the people who had experienced and interpreted these events.

While interviews open research possibilities, they also present limitations since the small number of interviews and the limited range of information makes generalization difficult at best. My selection of the individuals was problematic in the sense that my closeness to them limited my objectivity. As indicated in Chapter II, the focus of my study is on how teachers balance their professional responsibilities with their community membership and hence have decided to interview those individuals who were both community members and teachers. I first had to choose between interviewing teachers who were currently teaching and those who were retired. I decided to interview the retired teachers because of the longevity of their experiences and the relative freedom with which they were able to speak. Current teachers,

whom I believed held many of the same views as the retired teachers, would necessarily be restricted in their comments, especially in those views which were in opposition to the county school board and the central administration. Those interviewed were chosen because of their great interest in both the school and the community. In addition, I chose these educators because of the love and respect that I hold for all of them. Due to the fact that one of my purposes was to learn more about the history of the school and the community, I selected these particular teachers because they were involved in the events, held responsible professional positions, and were active community members. They knew the history, were articulate, available and accessible and more likely to be candid in their responses. The retired teachers who were interviewed represent a particular group; those interviewed do not include current teachers or people outside the community. This study, therefore, is not intended to be comprehensive.

This chapter is organized into three sections. First, the interviews are presented and each interview is followed by my interpretation. Finally, my interpretation of all the interviews as a whole is given. I have sought to record as closely and accurately as possible their comments in order to capture the spirit, tone, texture and flavor of the teachers. Because of my love and respect

for all of these teachers, such a method will also affirm them and provide them with an opportunity to tell their own stories. The interpretations that follow each interview and the interpretation of the collective group are presented in order to relate their views with those of Peshkin and Katz, regarding the relationship between schools and community.

The Retired Teachers

Mrs. Roxie Payne Christian, Mrs. Bernice Cox Lowe, and Mrs. Ersie Pell McIntyre are all natives of Westfield. Both Mrs. Christian and Mrs. Pell attended and graduated from Westfield High School. Except for two years of Junior College, Mrs. Christian from the age of five until her retirement after 44 years of teaching second grade, spent her life at Westfield School. Mrs. McIntyre taught in Stokes County, became the first female supervisor there, and retired as the K-8 supervisor of Surry County Schools. Mrs. Bernice Lowe attended the old Ridge-Westfield School and later taught there until it was integrated with Westfield School in 1966 where she taught until her retirement.

Mrs. Gladys Addison Jessup, Mrs. Lena Matthews Smith, and Mrs. Vera Cox Smith were all born in Virginia and married men from Westfield. Mrs. Jessup and Mrs. Vera Smith began teaching at Nancy Reynolds in Stokes County,

but spent the remainder of their careers at Westfield School, for a total of 32 and 44 years, respectively, teaching grades six and four. Mrs. Lena Smith taught first grade at Westfield for nearly 30 years.

Mrs. Lena Smith, Mrs. Vera Smith, Mrs. Christian were my former teachers and the latter two also taught my parents. I began teaching at Westfield with them and Mrs. Lowe.

Each of the six teachers was contacted briefly to discuss reasons for the interview. All of the interviews were held in the teachers' homes for approximately two hours each; all of the conversations were recorded on audiotape. I visited Mrs. Jessup, Mrs. Christian, and Mrs. McIntyre on two occasions for an additional two hours each. Mrs. Jessup seemed ill at ease with the tape recorder at first, so on my second visit, I not only used the recorder but also took written notes. None of the others seemed intimidated by the microphone, and even graciously agreed to hold it for better reception. Mrs. Christian and Mrs. McIntyre seemed to enjoy the conversations which exceeded my expectations, so by mutual agreement, I returned for a second visit. Aunt Vera Smith in anticipation of my visit had written some information to share with me. Mrs. Christian also shared some items of historical importance including a report card of her mother-in-law from 1890 from Westfield High School,

pictures, personal papers, newspaper clippings, and information on both the Westfield Friends Meeting and the First Baptist Church of Westfield. Mrs. Lowe was contacted by phone following the interview for more information on the history of the education of the black community.

The following kinds of questions are representative of those that were used to initiate the conversations:

Could you tell me something about your early life?

How and when did you decide to become a teacher?

Below are listed some questions that are representative of those asked to the all of the teachers:

Did politics enter into the hiring of teachers?

Do you think that politics is more involved in education today?

Do you think that when you started teaching, the communities had more control over their schools that they do now?

Do you think the central offices in Dobson or Raleigh had as much control or influence over Westfield School when you started teaching as they do now?

Can you think of an example of political influence?

In your first years at Westfield, did you see any problems in the school or the community?

Are there advantages or disadvantages in living in the community in which you teach?

I'm particularly interested in the boundaries of Westfield such as the county line, the township lines, Westfield Volunteer Fire Department District, the Westfield Exchange of the Surry Telephone Membership District, the Westfield Post Office, and Westfield School. It is my belief that Westfield has always been a part of both Surry and Stokes counties. Would you agree?

Can you tell me why you feel that way?

Can you tell me how these problems have affected the Westfield Community?

Were they ever any advantages or disadvantages to having your child at the school where you taught?

As a teacher, how do you feel about the current reorganization which includes the closing of Westfield School?

As a member of the community, how do you feel about this issue?

What effect do you think this will have on the community?

As a teacher, why you would want to see the school stay there?

Do you think there are any educational advantages for the children going to the new Westfield School?

Do you see advantages for the Westfield students going to the new Pilot Mountain Middle School?

Do you, as a citizen, understand the middle school concept?

Is it fair to say that the Surry County Board of Education and the administrative staff did not do a very good job in educating the community when we voted for that bond proposal two years ago? Do you think the average citizen understands the middle school concept?

The bond referendum did not pass in the North Westfield Precinct. Do you think parents underhand the situation beyond the fact that the schools are being reorganized?

How will you feel when Westfield School is not here anymore?

An Added Proposal

In the course of my study (and in a departure from my original plan) I decided to interview the first principal of the new Pilot Mountain Middle School after hearing him speak at the final Westfield High School Alumni Association meeting concerning the professional implications of the merger. Because he was sensitive enough to speak to those issues, and as a staunch supporter of the middle-school concept, I interviewed him in order to obtain another perspective. As a native of the community, as a professional and a principal who has

studied middle schools, I asked him to respond to the following issues:

What are the professional assumptions behind the middle school concept?

What you think are the major benefits of such a program?

What is the value of the middle school approach?

What do you see are the advantages?

Who benefits from this?

Is it a benefit to students?

Is it a benefit to the community?

Does anybody lose as a result of this?

What, if any, costs are there?

What do you think will happen as a consequence of the middle school approach?

Would other projects be envisioned down the road as a result of the middle school concept?

Particularly with respect to Pilot Mountain Middle School, how do national ideas fit here?

The interviews that are presented here are arranged in order of sequence by the date of the interview.

Interviews and interpretations

Mrs. Gladys Addison Jessup Interviews, March 17 and April 9, 1993

Although Mrs. Jessup was neither a former teacher of mine, nor did I teach with her at Westfield, she did teach my parents and she spent thirty-two years teaching at Westfield. Her son and only child, Addison, is exactly two months older than I, and we have remained best friends since our first grade introduction at Westfield. I have visited often in her home as a youth and during her retirement. Because she retired only two years before I started teaching, she had often joked that I "got her old job." Her husband, Frank, who ran a general store next door to their home in Westfield for over fifty years, is a member of both of the oldest families in Westfield, the Jessups and Jacksons, and I am related to both his parents through both of my parents.

Gladys Addison Jessup is a third-generation teacher from Emory, near Abington in Washington County, Virginia. She is a graduate of Emory and Henry College which is located in her hometown. "I was reared in a college town. I grew up just a few hundred yards from the administration building. I had a blanket certificate through high school. I did teach my first year in a high school in

Holaker, Virginia, a coal-mining town, and I didn't like it because of the conditions there. Before Christmas I was applying at other places. It was too far from home."

She came to Stokes County to the then-modern and one of the best-equipped schools in the area, Nancy Reynolds High School, approximately five miles from Westfield. Funds for its construction came from the family of R.J. Reynolds, whose mother, Nancy was born nearby. The school continues to be subsidized by Reynolds funds today. Mrs. Jessup noted that R.J.'s brother who succeeded him as chairman of the company continued to support the school. "Mr. Will Reynolds told us that if we would teach for one month for free, he would pay us for teaching an additional month so that Nancy Reynolds [School] could have an eight-month term instead of six [months].

"I first came to Nancy Reynolds High School in 1929 and taught there for two years; then I came to Westfield and taught for 32 years. Nancy Reynolds was a fine new facility and I [thought I] might make more money there than I would have in my native Virginia."

I asked Mrs. Jessup that since her father-in-law was on the Westfield School committee, if that fact could have had some effect on her being hired at Westfield. I explained that I was interested in the issue of local,

community control as well as centralized control from Dobson (county office), Raleigh, or Washington, DC

She at first responded that she didn't know whether politics entered into the hiring of teachers when she began teaching. However, when asked if she thought politics was more involved with the hiring of teachers today, her response was more adamant. "Sure I do! Oh yes! I didn't hear anything about politics at that time. That's not the reason I got the job at Nancy Reynolds because they didn't even know my politics. And they didn't know it out here (Westfield) for some time," she replied with a laugh. She also felt that the local school committees had more power in the hiring of teachers when she began teaching.

She noted that when the principal, O.H. Hauser, visited her father-in-law's home, she and her husband were living there during their first year of marriage. Mr. Hauser asked her why was she was still teaching at Nancy Reynolds and living in Westfield, and what type of certificate she held. Soon she was hired to replace a teacher who was not rehired for the next term.

When asked if the central office for Surry County Schools in Dobson, NC had as much control or influence over Westfield School when she started teaching as it does now, Mrs. Jessup related the following incident: "Dobson has never liked Westfield. I can tell you one thing, that

when there was a vacancy at Westfield, a friend of mine in Virginia applied for a place, and he was asked about his politics. He told them that if that was the way the place was run, he did not want any part of it, and he did not apply."

She further explained that this was in the early 1930s and that she felt the Democrats controlled both the Surry County Board of Commissioners and Board of Education. Asked what her friend's politics were, she said, "I'm not sure, I think he was a Republican. On the local school committee was my father-in-law Pyruss H. Jessup, a Republican, and your great-uncles, your Grandmother Emma Smith's brother, Numa Christian and her brother-in-law, Dr. Tom Smith, who were Democrats.

When I asked Mrs. Jessup if she could give a specific example of political influence in Westfield, her husband Frank, interjected, "When they were trying to get money to build this present building in 1929, it was said in Dobson that if the school was built, the community (North Westfield Precinct) would go ahead and vote Republican anyway. At that time there were only 4 or 5 or maybe a dozen Democrats in Westfield Township. Very few Democrats voted in 1928."

By implication, regardless of politics, Mrs. Jessup seems to have very much enjoyed her first years at Westfield. "I didn't see any problems. A lot of the

teachers at that time were local teachers. There is an advantage in that because you know your children, and they know you. There's an advantage, I think. Jennie Collins Simmons was in my fifth grade at Nancy Reynolds and when I told her that I would be moving to Westfield to teach sixth grade the next year, she said she would be there, and she was. Jennie had forty years of teaching. I've always been proud of Jennie, we've always been friends. She had few advantages. She went to Guilford College with the encouragement of the Rev. Lewis McFarland, who was the pastor of her church, Westfield Friends. He told her that she was intelligent and would make something of herself, that she should go on and do the best she could. When she started at Guilford, she didn't have money or clothes like the other girls, but she got a part-time job in the English department as an academic assistant to help meet her expenses."

Mrs. Jessup noted that she had been a member of the Home Demonstration Club, had taught the Senior Ladies Sunday School Class at Westfield Baptist for about ten years, had taught Vacation Bible School, and was a charter member of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Westfield Volunteer Fire Department. She also noted that during World War II, she and other teachers helped with the rationing tickets and the draft registration. "I registered my own husband for the draft," she said with a laugh.

I asked her if she could give other reasons why she thinks it is important to live and teach in the same community. She explained, "Because you get to know the children and their parents. You need to know something about the environment of every child. There are numerous differences in the advantages and disadvantages that a child has, and when you're in the community you know something about what advantages they've had and what disadvantages they've had. There was a family with eight or ten children who lived near my father-in-law. There were lacking food and clothing. One of the two surviving children married a woman I did not even know. He told her to bring me some cakes. I called to thank her and asked her what I had ever done to deserve this gift. He told me, 'I'll tell you why. You taught all of us and were good to us and I am the only one left. I wanted to help.' Those two flowers sitting on the table at the window were given to me by his widow yesterday." Mrs. Jessup could not think of a single instance when she felt it was a disadvantage to live and teach in the same community.

I explained that I am particularly interested in the boundaries of Westfield such as the county line, the township lines, Westfield Volunteer Fire Department District, the Westfield Exchange of the Surry Telephone Membership District, and the districts of the Westfield Post Office, and Westfield School. I said that it was my

belief that Westfield has always been a part of both Surry and Stokes counties, and asked her if she agreed.

"Yes, yes. We had children from Stokes County. At the end of school we had to make a list of those students and I believe that Stokes paid Surry. I believe that it was better like that, too. For one thing because of recent troubles between Surry and Stokes. They are having more trouble about boundaries than they ever had when I was teaching. They didn't have any trouble about boundaries when I was teaching. In the Stokes County (situation) there shouldn't be a reason why Stokes County students shouldn't be able to come to Westfield if they live right close to the school. They should be able to attend the nearest school, I think."

I then asked Mrs. Jessup if there were ever any advantages or disadvantages in having her only child at the school where she taught. I was a classmate of her son and we remain fast friends, today. From a telephone conversation to set up the interview, I knew this would bring up painful memories. "I would say that at one time and one time only, it was a disadvantage, and that trouble was with just one principal there. This principal made the disadvantage by his feelings not only toward my son, but others," she said, her voice choking with emotion. It was apparent that she felt so strongly about this

situation that it was difficult for her to talk about even more than 30 years later.

After a brief pause, I asked her how she dealt with this situation. "Well, I talked to some of the (local) board members at that time. I do know that the principal went to one of the board members and wanted them to fire me. I think one member talked to him, but I don't know exactly what the principal said. I do know that when the principal punished my son unfairly, and the board member saw that my son was bruised, the board did nothing." She then explained that she withdrew her son from Westfield School and sent him to Mt. Airy Junior High in the eighth grade. "There was nothing else to do to have any peace. This principal did his best to make my son stay here. I told the superintendent that my son was not going back to this school with this principal and if need be I would send him to school in Virginia with my sister." She explained that her son attended school in Mt. Airy in the eighth and ninth grades, then he came to East Surry High School in Pilot Mountain when it opened. While her son attended school in Mt. Airy for two years, she continued to serve at Westfield with this principal. I asked if she could tell me how she professionally dealt with this situation. "I just went on and did what I thought was right in my classroom and paid no attention (to him)." She explained that she tried to so what was best for her

students regardless of what the principal was doing. "He tried to get my son to come back to Westfield, and I was just as determined that he would not. This was the principal's first year as a principal and I was told that an older teacher told him when he came here that there were some older teachers up here and he would do well to listen to them sometimes and not throw his weight around too much. Then he made the remark at my husband's store that he wished he had all young teachers who didn't have any more sense that to do what he told them to do."

This principal came to Westfield for the 1958-59 term and left when the high school closed at the end of the 1960-61 term. Mrs. Jessup feels that there was a special issue between her and this principal that was not shared by the other teachers, who did not have their own children in school at the time. She suggested that some of the teachers liked the principal, but nonetheless, "You don't know how I hated that man, you didn't know how I hated him."

She explained that when the principal left and Westfield became a 1-8 elementary school, the transition went smoothly. Prior to our second conversation, Mrs. Jessup compiled a list of all the principals for whom she had worked: Countiss (Virginia), Charles Hiatt (Nancy Reynolds) and at Westfield, O.W. Hauser, Mr. Minor, Luther Byrd, Paul Sowell, John Cox, John Craven, and Rex Gordon.

She noted that only with the one principal did she have conflict.

I noted that she taught for only four more years and then retired. I thought that perhaps the relationship with the principal might have had some effect on her retirement decision, even after he had left. This was not the case as she explained, "I was 62 years old in November 1964, and retired the next spring. I had taught for 35 years total. Mrs. Hill and I were the same age and retired at the same time."

We next discussed how she felt about the current reorganization which includes the closing of Westfield School. "I don't feel very good about it. I want Westfield School left where it is. Its the oldest school in the county and I think it should be left right where it is. I look back at the history of Westfield and I look at the people who have graduated from Westfield and I have the feeling that Westfield should remain like it is. I'm not looking forward to this school being moved." She further explained that the effect on the community "would depend on the buildings. I don't know what uses will be made of the buildings. Good uses could be made of them that could help the community, but we don't know what will happen to the buildings. We'll have to find out what happens to the buildings. I would like to see something that would bring the whole community together, to work

together. I don't know what that would be. But the buildings are there and it will help the community, but not as much as the school would help." As a teacher she thinks "that parents who have gone to school at Westfield will be more interested in Westfield School as it is than off somewhere else. The ones who have gone to Westfield School, who graduated there, aren't going to feel good about it, either."

Mrs. Jessup is very uncertain about any educational advantages for the children going to the new Westfield School, "Maybe different courses will be given. We don't know what is going to happen there. They may have advantages that they don't have out here. They may have access to more educational advantages that they have here."

Neither does she see advantages for the Westfield students going to the new Pilot Mountain Middle School. Students in other earlier years were given the same advantages (at East Surry High School), but I don't know. But for the middle school, I don't know about that."

Mrs. Jessup seemed to be unclear in her understanding of the middle school concept. I asked her if it was fair to say that the Surry County Board of Education and the administrative staff did not do a very good job in educating the community when we voted for that bond proposal two years ago, and she replied, "No, I do

not." When asked if she felt that the average citizen understands the middle school concept, in like manner she said, "I don't believe they do, no." I noted that the bond referendum in May, 1991 did not pass in the North Westfield Precinct, and asked if she thought the parents underhand the concept other than the fact that the schools were being reorganized, she replied, "No, I don't."

My final question to Mrs. Jessup was "How will you feel when Westfield School is not here anymore?" She quickly and firmly answered, "I feel like Westfield had been double-crossed."

Interpretation of Gladys Addison Jessup's Comments. Mrs. Jessup commented on political boundaries at a greater length than any of the other teachers with whom I spoke and throughout her story there was a strong concern for the well-being of the community. Perhaps she spoke with more conviction and confidence since North Westfield Precinct has consistently voted with a Republican majority for many years, which speaks to her identity. Her husband has long been recognized as a Republican party stalwart and her son is a former Republican Precinct Chairman. Therefore she is connected to the power structure. At the time she came to teach at Westfield and married, Republicans were in a minority in the county and state. She feels that political influences still exist. "Sure I do! Oh yes! I didn't hear anything about politics at

that time. That's not the reason I got the job at Nancy Reynolds because they didn't even know my politics. And they didn't know it out here (Westfield) for some time," she replied with a laugh.

She perceives a political division between Westfield and the county seat, Dobson, a Democratic stronghold, and used for an example a friend of whom she had personal knowledge. "Dobson has never liked Westfield. I can tell you one thing, that when there was a vacancy at Westfield, a friend of mine in Virginia applied for a place and he was asked about his politics. He told them that if that was the way the place was run, he did not want any part of it, and he did not apply."

In discussing the Stokes/Surry conflict, Mrs. Jessup's characterized the value of personal relationships in her comments about student from Nancy Reynolds, who had followed her when she transferred to Westfield. The Stokes County issue had come to a head only after she retired. Like the other teachers, she spoke to the issue in terms of distance rather than education. Therefore, she recognized another community boundary when children are not allowed to attend the school nearest their homes. "They didn't have any trouble about boundaries when I was teaching. In the Stokes County [situation] there shouldn't be a reason why Stokes County students shouldn't be able to come to Westfield if they live right close to

the school. They should be able to attend the nearest school, I think."

To discuss the issue to which Mrs. Jessup speaks with the greatest intensity is perhaps to discover that which is most centrally important to her integrity. That issue concerns the problems she had with a former principal and her son. This resulted in her son's transfer to Mt. Airy Junior High. The principal attempted to retain her son at Westfield and to have the local committee and county superintendent intervene, but Mrs. Jessup remained firm in her decision. Therefore, her son's well-being was of greatest importance to her, even in the face of a possible confrontation with the local committee and a conversation with the superintendent. To Mrs. Jessup this story represents the conflict between professional and personal issues. She was determined to remove her son from this situation even at the cost of her professional knowledge. This decision was even more difficult for her because she was so connected to the community. Obviously, she wanted her son to attend Westfield School, for the community to be intact, for all the dynamics to function. When this situation threatened this stability, she was tormented. "You don't know how I hated that man, you didn't know how I hated him." She anguished over making her very difficult decision. She was not only distressed with her son being maltreated, but

she also had to choose between two issues in which she placed great value; the first was her son's welfare and the second was her loyalty to the school. For some individuals in the same situation, the decision to transfer to another school would not be nearly so difficult. One of the reasons that she hated the principal was not because he was unfair to her son, but that he made it intolerable for her son to remain at the school she loved, and where she wished for her son to be. This dilemma adds a tragic dimension to the situation. Certainly Mrs. Jessup exerted her personal control in transferring her son outside the school system and remaining firm in her decision. The transfer was not only inconvenient in terms of transportation, it was also difficult for her son to be separated daily from his life-long friends. However, her personal power did not extend to coming to terms with the principal and having her son remain at Westfield School. She continued to teach at the school and work with the principal for five more years until he transferred out of the system when the Westfield High School was consolidated. All in all, her son's welfare was more important than her loyalty to Westfield, and therefore the decision to remove him from the community school where she taught was a very powerful one. Her dilemma also speaks to the larger issue of the professional versus the community. The choices between

the two are not always clearly defined. Professionalism is not always bad, and the community is not always good. Sometimes when they clash, one must choose what is best for one's own personal interests, as in Mrs. Jessup's case, even at the price of community. Mrs. Jessup could have changed schools herself, but she chose to remain in the community. When she had the choice of remaining loyal to the community and keeping her son at the school at whatever the cost, she made her decision based on her perception of the best interests of her son. The fact that the pain of this situation still exists for her, thirty-five years after the fact, reflects the agonizing quality of her decision.

For Mrs. Jessup, the school as community, the personal relationships, will not be maintained at the new Westfield School or Pilot Mountain Middle School. She speaks to the possible changes in terms of "education advantages" rather that personal relationships. She is very uncertain about any educational advantages for the children going to the new Westfield School, "Maybe different courses will be given. We don't know what is going to happen there. They may have advantages that they don't have out here. They may have access to more educational advantages than they have here." Neither does she see advantages for the Westfield students going to the new Pilot Mountain Middle School. Students in other

earlier years were given the same advantages (at East Surry High School), but I don't know. But for the middle school, I don't know about that."

Her care and compassion are reflected in her comments concerning the needy of the community. The sense of coming to know people on a personal basis was revealed in her comments on the having local teachers in the local school. "There is an advantage in that because you know your children, and they know you . . . Because you get to know the children and their parents. You need to know something about the environment of every child . . . when you're in the community you know something about what advantages they've had and what disadvantages they've had."

Mrs. Jessup made scant reference to the physical plant in which she taught for over thirty years, most of these years being spent in one classroom. She noted the loss to the community of the buildings. She explained that the effect on the community "would depend on the buildings. I don't know what uses will be made of the buildings. Good uses could be made of them, that could help the community, but we don't know what will happen to the buildings. We'll have to find out what happens to the buildings. I would like to see something that would bring the whole community together, to work together. I don't know what that would be. But the buildings are there and

it will help the community, but not as much as the school would help."

Mrs. Jessup is knowledgeable in the history of the community and has been active in community affairs as a member of several organizations. Her sense of community traditions, and its history and the history of the school are given as the greatest criteria for not being moved. "It's the oldest school in the county and I think it should be left right where it is. I look back at the history of Westfield and I look at the people who have graduated from Westfield . . . parents who have gone to school at Westfield will be more interested in Westfield School as it is than off somewhere else . . . The ones who have gone to Westfield School, who graduated there, aren't going to feel good about it, either."

To Mrs. Jessup, the loss is also a personal one, which will interrupt her sense of place in Westfield. Her comments speak to her desire for continuity. "I don't feel very good about it. I want Westfield School left where it is . . . I have the feeling that Westfield School should remain where it is."

Perhaps Mrs. Jessup sees the movement of the school in political terms; that some undefined outsiders or "others," perhaps county officials and politicos in Dobson and Pilot Mountain, who have conspired to remove the school from the community. Mrs. Jessup feels alienated

from the middle school policy, and as such, it is irrelevant for her. She noted that she did not understand the middle school concept, and that neither did other community members. Possibly she feels that a political deal has been cut to get a new facility and to implement the middle-school concept, but at the greater expense of taking the school from the community. Her anger and outrage at what she feels is a political, not an educational decision, are expressed in her final comment, "I feel like Westfield has been double-crossed."

Vera Cox Smith Interview, May 4, 1993

Great-Aunt Vera Smith is married to my Great-Uncle Bryan Smith, brother to my late Grandmother Annie Smith. They built their house approximately 20 years ago on his ancestral farm in front of the house where he was born. Until his mother, my great-grandmother Emma Christian Smith, died in 1959, they lived in her home and cared for her. Their son, Robert Lynn Smith bought my grandparents' home which is directly across the road and adjacent to Grandma Emma's home place which was built in 1860. Aunt Vera was my fourth grade teacher and taught my parents as well. She and I concurrently taught at Westfield for seven years until her retirement in 1975 after 44 years of teaching.

Born in Patrick County, Virginia which shares a common border with Stokes County, Mrs. Smith, to whom I refer as Aunt Vera, went to Red Bank High School and first experienced losing a school when the high school was moved to Blue Ridge, leaving the elementary grades at Red Bank. That school has since been moved also and is now a sock factory. "I grew up about a mile from Red Bank High School. I always wanted to be a teacher. I always loved school. I had several brothers and sisters and we played school which I always enjoyed. My daddy told me that I could go to Radford College. At that time you could go in the summer, then teach that winter, by just going three months and that's what I did. You didn't have a certificate at that time, I don't think. I went to Radford State Teachers' College (which is now Radford University) in 1930 when I was seventeen years old, and taught that fall. I started teaching in a one-room school and had grades one through seven. On top of that I had primer and that made eight classes. At that time you didn't have the problems that you had later. I had twenty-some students. Some of the older students would help with the younger ones. Sometimes you had some that would disrupt. I found out then that open classrooms wouldn't work when you had a large number of students. Really and truly, that was one of the worst experiments I have ever experienced. This was in Patrick County,

Virginia, at a little school called Culler. This was my first teaching experience in 1930-31.

The next year they passed a rule that you couldn't teach unless you had been [to college] for one year. So I went the next summer, winter, [spring semester], and summer session to make two years. Then I went back and started teaching again and have been teaching ever since! Later I went to summer school at Appalachian. I went with Virginia Hart, Gladys Owens, Alice Tucker, and Frances Pell Martin. Bryan and I were married in 1933. I am sure I went up there in 1935, because we had a new 1935 Ford that I drove up there. I continued until I received my 'A' certificate. I taught in Virginia for three years. I got married and came to live in Stokes County and taught at Nancy Reynolds for three years. Nancy Reynolds was six miles from here, but Patrick County would have been over 30 miles to travel. In 1937 there was an opening at Westfield and it was so much closer than Nancy Reynolds. I loved it at Nancy Reynolds, everyone was so nice to me, but it was just handier for me to teach at Westfield. I came to teach at Westfield in 1937 and taught there for 38 years."

Asked whether there was any politics involved in her being hired as a teacher at Westfield, she replied that she was "not sure, but Miss Emma talked to Dr. Tom Smith [her brother-in-law and member of the Wesfield

School Committee] and that might have had some politics in it. She also spoke with Tom Smith [my grandfather's brother and Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners] about my getting the job at Nancy Reynolds."

I mentioned that Mrs. Jessup had told me that during World War II, teachers registered men for the draft. I asked if she was involved with that operation. "Oh, Lord yes. I registered everyone in Johnstown." Johnstown is the unofficial name given to the Westfield section that lies in Big Creek Township in Stokes County. "Every boy that went into the service I registered. Bryan was running the store at that time." This was a service station and grocery that he purchased from My Grandfather Richard G. Smith who had built it at the intersection of NC Highways 89 and 66. "That is where I would see them. If I didn't register them there, they would come up here [her home]. A lot of them are dead, having been killed in the war. Not only that but we had to help with the rationing of sugar and all that at that time. We would do that at Westfield High School on a day for registration."

Aunt Vera had written on some note cards her philosophy of teaching:

"Love children.

Be patient.

Love a challenge.

Remember each child is different.

Try to motivate each child to do his or her best, not someone else.

Use old or new methods whichever works best.

Remember that new is not always to the best.

Never criticize pupils or peers in public; if there is cause for criticism, do it in private.

This goes for the schools, too. Schools get enough negative publicity without help from teachers; say constructive things or keep quiet.

If things go wrong today, there is always tomorrow to try again.

Last but not least, there's never a dull moment, and that's what I loved about school. It may be frustrating at times, but you will never die of boredom."

I read to Aunt Vera some of the background material I had written concerning my ties to Westfield. Her granddaughters, Jessica and Jennie had just gone to their home across the road when I arrived. Uncle Bryan had just picked them up from Westfield School. They stay with their grandparents until their parents Robert Lynn and Sandy Smith return from East Surry High School in Pilot Mountain where he teaches English and coaches and she serves as secretary. Because this daily routine is necessitated by the fact that buses from Surry County are

not allowed to run in Stokes County, I asked her to give some information that led to this situation.

I remembered that Mr. J. Sam Gentry, Superintendent of Surry County Schools was informed at midnight of the original decision by the Stokes County Board of Education not to allow Stokes County students to enroll in Surry County, a tradition that has existed for over a hundred years.

"Yes, that's right. Robert was getting ready to go to school when we got the message the next morning. In 1972, my son Robert had already been attending East Surry, practicing in the band for two weeks before school was to start. We were notified that no Stokes County students would be allowed to enter East Surry. If they came, they would be turned away. So we didn't send him. A group of parents got together and went to Danbury. We decided to get a lawyer, who said he would take the case for $3000.00. We raised the money at a meeting at Westfield. We met with the lawyer in the office of the Superintendent of Stokes County Schools. We were told that he had left town and would not be back. They did not want to let us in. They said that we might as well go back home. We said, 'No,we're going to stay here until we see the superintendent.' So we waited and waited and he did not come. It was getting nearly night. I guess he thought we would leave. But everyone just went in and sat down.

There weren't enough chairs and seats for everyone. So those who didn't have a seat just sat down on the floor. We sat there and told them that we were going to stay all night unless he came and talked with us. So finally he did come and talk with us.

"We still had to go to court, though, to get them [Stokes County Board of Education] to agree to let the [Stokes] students go to [Westfield and] East Surry." Aunt Vera, Richard Hauser, and Elsie Dearmin were on the committee to represent all the parents when the case was heard in Superior Court in Danbury, NC. They met in the chambers of Judge James M. Long while the packed courtroom of parents and children waited. "We did not have to do much. I think that the lawyers did it. I guess they struck a bargain. We did not have to talk in open court. The agreement was that the students had to provide their own transportation. Some of the parents could not afford to carry their students every day so some of them decided to attend Stokes County schools. Some of them still do that because they can not afford the [private costs of] transportation [to Westfield Elementary and East Surry High].

I remember Reggie Francis was a student in the original case [1972] and then had a child when we went back later [1989]. There are several around here now who go to Francisco [School in Stokes County]. It would not

have been so bad to have gone to Francisco, but going all the way to North Stokes - that's what I really objected to. And then I thought it was sort of an insult to say we couldn't go to the school that we had been going to for all of these years; for them to write and say on the day that school was going to start and say that you couldn't go anymore without giving a reason or anything."

She described her feelings when she first learned that her son would not be allowed to enroll again at East Surry. "I felt terrible. I thought of all the years we had gone to Westfield, and everybody around here went to Westfield from Stokes County and then to East Surry. It is only seven miles from home to East Surry [High School in Pilot Mountain, NC], but it is over 20 miles from here to North Stokes [High School near Danbury, NC]. I had nothing against Stokes County Schools, I had taught in Stokes County for three years and I enjoyed it. But I didn't see the necessity of putting the children on a bus and going that many miles when they could go right here at home. So that is the reason. Robert would have had to have been separated from his friends that he had been in school with since kindergarten. All these years the boundary lines have been from Big Creek to Tom's Creek as the Westfield District. We've lived within that district and we felt it was our privilege to go to Westfield School, as a feeder school, to East Surry. We felt that

we should go there. Since the very beginning [of the Westfield Community] that school has been at Westfield and all of these people have been going there, all of these years. And they [Stokes County Board of Education] have taken it upon themselves to say that we cannot."

Great Grandma Emma's home is located just behind Aunt Vera's and her birthplace was across the road. She had attended the old academy in Westfield over 110 years ago. "Oh, yes. Before that the Quakers had the school down below Old Westfield [Friends Church], but these same people [Stokes County residents] were involved. But the whole thing of it is that they [Stokes County Board of Education] wanted more students down there [at Francisco and Nancy Reynolds] because they were losing teachers, due to declining enrollments. Stokes had always had to pay Surry for the students to attend. I don't know if Stokes continued to pay after 1972, I assume that they did, because we didn't pay for it."

She then discussed the problems her son and granddaughters had experienced when the eldest tried to enroll in kindergarten at Westfield. "Robert and Sandy had gone through the same thing we had gone through with Robert. They had to hire an attorney. I went with them down there [Danbury, NC] and we had a meeting and went through the very same thing we had gone through nearly twenty years before except it did not take as long. We

met with the Superintendent of Stokes County Schools again. Now we were the same people, grandparents meeting on behalf of our grandchildren. We showed up down there just as we had done with our own children, who were now parents themselves. We helped pay the expenses so they could go to Westfield." She noted that there were other children involved at this time other than her granddaughter. "I remember Phillip and Doris Jessup, Linda and Faye Christian, Randy Pack, Mr. and Mrs. Reggie Francis. It seems to me that we agreed to pay $200.00 per family. If you really want to talk to someone who was upset, talk to Reggie Francis and Phillip Jessup. I remember we went for lunch and a teacher at Francisco was in line ahead of us. She came back and told Reggie, 'Don't worry now. I'll be just as good to your children as if you hadn't done this. I'll never take it out on the children.'

Reggie said, 'I know you won't take it out on mine. You may run me out of my home, and my school, but you'll never teach my child."

So he was really angry and so was Phillip Jessup and his wife Doris. She was from the Francisco community. She and her family had words about it."

This problem continues to create new worries and concerns. "Oh, yes. A lot of people would have built [homes] and bought lots down this way [Stokes section of

Westfield]. They are not buying them anymore because we still have this problem. After my son went through all of that and after his daughters Jessica and Jennie have gone through all of that, they still have to get permission every year to go to Westfield School. They [1972 decision] gave them [Stokes County Board of Education] an ultimatum that all of those who were attending Westfield or East Surry in the first law suit could continue to go, but others would have to sign up [for permission to attend school in Surry County] each year."

Several months before this interview, I had told Aunt Vera that I wanted to talk with her about how she felt about the loss of Westfield School. She had written her comments and read them to me to record on tape. She had written the comments prior to my visit not only to express her thoughts, but so as not to reveal the depth of her emotions. The statement is quoted here for her own words faithfully explain the pain and depth of her loss. She entitled her essay, "What Losing Our School Means to Me":

"Say it isn't so. First the high school and now everything. Westfield, as so many have known it for all these years was a center of community activities for so many years. The teachers who worked there were able to meet and know all the parents and children in the Westfield Community. We were able to know where each

child lived and know all of the children in the family and if both parents lived in the home. We also knew the grandparents and whether they were still living. We knew on which main or rural road they lived. When there were any school activities in which you needed help, you knew exactly which parents or grandparents you could count on. Before the high school was moved [1961], there was a special bond between all of the students. This definitely all changed when they left there, our own home school, and were transported to another neighborhood [Pilot Mountain]. After the high school was moved, the parents had two centers of interest, and gradually the high school began to get more of the [parents'] interest in school activities. We still had the grade school, but gradually things began to change.

"When I first started teaching at Westfield, there was a gym built by parents and some students. This was a very busy place during the school year. During the winter it was heated by a pot-bellied stove. Many people of the community would always show up, never minding how cold it was, to support the team. Westfield always had good athletes and always won their share of honors. The gym was used until many years later [1956] until a new gym was constructed by the county [1959]. It is still in good condition today, and I do hope it will survive for recreational purposes as we say goodbye to Westfield." As

if she were actually saying farewell, Aunt Vera's voice began to choke with emotion, but she continued reading. "Our school had never had an agricultural building like the other schools. Westfield was a farming and agricultural community and they decided they would have one even if they had to build it themselves, which they did. It was later used as the first Westfield Volunteer Fire Department, and continued in use until the present firehouse was built. This old agricultural building is still standing and has had many uses.

"Our first lunchroom was in the basement of the main building. At first sandwiches were made by the lunchroom workers and later meals were planned and cooked. Later [1966] a new modern lunchroom was built and has been enjoyed by many Westfield students. A covered walkway from the school to the lunchroom was a real pleasure. The lunchroom is still in good condition and I'm hoping it can be saved and used along with the gym and other buildings, including the 'little building' [primary building] where the primary students were. Until the little building was constructed [1952], students were assigned to home rooms in the main building. Moving day came for grades 1-3 when the building was ready. Things were never quite the same after that. We didn't see these students nearly as much. This building is still good and I am wishing that this building can also be salvaged along with the gym and

lunchroom. Maybe we can help save these and put them to good use as a recreational center. If so, maybe our community can still keep in touch with our children and young adults and senior citizens. When I come to Westfield to pick up my grandchildren - I'm not going to be able to get through this, Ricky . . ." Here, the thought of her dear grandchildren not attending Westfield, and Aunt Vera probably not being able to pick them up after school and care for them, caused Aunt Vera to stop at this point for a moment to dry her eyes. I told her that I understood that this was an emotional topic for her, and that was one of the reasons I wanted to have her help with this study. After a few moments she continued.

". . . And look at the school with its flags flying (again a pause), I'm sorry . . . in the wind it makes me so sad to think that it's going to change. I am glad that the children are getting such a nice new building where they will have more advantages than we had, but I don't think they will experience any more love and caring than was found in the old Westfield School . . . Maybe I can get a hold of myself now . . . The Westfield School that we've known and loved so long has served the needs of many boys and girls during these many years." (She again began to weep softly.) "There comes a time when we must decide to let go and turn the reins over to new and hopefully better days . . . I guess I have read it all. I'm having

a time here, I'll tell you. I wish them the best, but I'll always miss our old Westfield School." I put my arm around her shoulders and we sat quietly for a few moments while she dried her eyes.

I then turned the conversation to another area of interest she had mentioned in her statement. In response to my question as to the advantages or disadvantages of living in the community where one teaches, she replied, "Oh, I definitely think there are advantages. I have always enjoyed living where I taught because then I could know the parents better. But I have a sister that taught first grade and she drove ten or fifteen miles [to school] and said she enjoyed being out of the community, but I could never understand that. She said that even if you went to church, there they would be and the parents would want to know how the children were doing and you would hate to say they were just as mean as they could be (hearty laugh). So she said it was just much easier on her to teach out of the community than it was to teach in the community."

Aunt Vera said that it was not difficult to meet a parent at church or the grocery store who might approach you to ask about their child's progress. "I would tell them the same thing that I would tell them if they came to school and asked. I would tell them the truth, but I

might try to smooth it over a little bit, but it would be the truth."

She never felt there was a conflict teaching in the same community where she lived. "By the time I retired from teaching at Westfield, I had taught the parents of so many of my children. By the last year I taught, I had the grandchildren of three of my former students," she said with a laugh. "Now when I taught a Nancy Reynolds, the parents were really nice, but I didn't know them as well as I did the parents at Westfield. I knew just about all of my students, parents and grandparents and their backgrounds. At that time if we didn't know them, we had to go and visit them and find out about them. We had to visit the families of every child in our room and find out something about them."

Knowing that first grade teachers were encouraged to visit in the homes, but surprised to learn that upper grade teachers formerly visited also, I inquired of her the reasons the practice was discontinued.

"Later with improved transportation, and more activities at school, you would meet more of the parents in PTA and all of that. But then way back, people did not have the luxury of going anytime they wanted. So many of the people lived on farms and were too busy working. They didn't have transportation either. So if you wanted to know them, then you went to visit them."

She could not give a specific example of the advantage of living in the community and knowing the students, but did agree that the phenomenon was just a part of the normal course of activities.

"I think that after you had taught awhile and they knew you, it was easier for them [parents] to see your side and not put you to blame all of the time. I think they could see both sides of a situation." She also believes that teachers and parents not knowing and communicating with one another is a problem in education today. "Oh, I think that is a whole lot of the problem, a whole lot of the problem, yes, it is! And I think another problem is that so many of the parents are having to work and children are being put in the new day care centers like the one over at Pilot Mountain. I don't think it's a disadvantage there, but I think that when the children have to come home from school with no one at home or maybe stay with someone who is not well-fitted to keep children. That is one of the problems, too. I was waiting to pick up my granddaughters at Westfield that last time that it snowed and the snow was accumulating on my car. I saw this one little boy come out the front door when the bell rang and he had on a tank top and shorts. He came out and played in the snow until I guess he got too cold and went back in. I worried about that little boy and wondered whether he got sick. When I went back the next day for

the children, he came out just as spry as he could be, so I guess it didn't hurt him. But then week before last when we got the first eighty-degree temperatures, he had on a long-sleeve shirt and long pants. I think that he must have to dress himself."

Aunt Vera did not feel that there were any problems in having her own child at the same school. "None whatsoever. No, sir! The only thing that may have been a disadvantage for him was that I think he thought he could not get away with anything, whereas some of the other children could get by with things. I felt that if he got by with something, the other children would say 'Oh, she's playing favorites.' So it might have been a disadvantage for him, but not for me. I did teach him in the fourth grade."

She did see some examples of centralization versus local control. "We were right at the end [border] of the county. Being where we were was a disadvantage. I think in later years it might not have been as pronounced as it was earlier. It always seemed that our supplies came last, for example."

She was ambivalent about whether the community should have more input into the affairs of Westfield School. While she agreed that the community should have more input, "I don't think one or two people ought to handle it, to speak for everybody. I think it ought to be

a democratic proposition where everybody gets to vote on it, to decide what to do instead of just letting two or three people have the right to say what we wanted." She also felt that the hiring of teachers by a local committee or the county school board would in either case "depend on who is on the board. I believe that when we first started teaching we were hired and fired," she said with a laugh, "by the local board."

She was also concerned about how the loss of the school affected the community. "Unless they put something back in its place up there for the community to be involved in, I think that we won't even realize that it is the same community. But if they put something there and have some kind of activities where the people are involved, which I hope they will, it might not make as much difference as we think it is going to make right now. The Ruritans and the ball clubs [are interested]. I don't know what they're going to do with these four good rooms in the little building."

Vera Cox Smith: Interpretation. Aunt Vera, more than any other teacher with whom I talked, and perhaps as well as any mother in the Westfield community, represents the dilemma faced by a community teacher whose integrity is threatened by agencies outside the community. Aunt Vera has personally experienced the effects that physical boundaries had on her family, community, and school. The

1972 decision by the Stokes County Board of Education to disallow Stokes students to attend Surry County Schools found her son, Robert, at East Surry High School.

Aunt Vera felt that the integrity of her family, school, and community had been impugned. The history of the Stokes County section of Westfield, Big Creek Township, which is known informally as "Johnstown" has always been oriented toward Westfield, even before the county line was drawn in 1770. My Great-grandmother, Emma Christian Smith, her mother-in-law, had lived on the same farm and attended Westfield Academy over one hundred years before. Her son, Uncle Bryan, had attended school in the building that was replaced by the current building. Aside from the formal boundary of the county line, Johnstown residents also had a Westfield Post Office address, were members of the Surry Telephone Membership Corporation, were active in the Westfield Volunteer Fire Department whose boundaries included sections of Stokes County, attended church in Westfield, and purchased gasoline and groceries in Westfield. However, these physical boundaries are largely irrelevant for Aunt Vera because she not only perceives these physical boundaries as such, but recognizes the more subtle psychological boundaries that exist in terms of her immediate family. Her immediate concern was for her son's socialization, as he had attended school at Westfield and had made friends and

participated in the band, sports and other activities at East Surry, which she did not want interrupted.

Aunt Vera's reaction to oppose this attack on the integrity and unity of her family, school, and community illustrates the concerns for maintaining a sense of this integrity. She discussed her political engagement which also points to her initiative. She was "insulted" by the decision of the Stokes County Board of Education and was determined not to accept the decision or remain docile about the situation. Although her son's immediate problem precipitated her reaction, the nature of her response represented her political resistance. She became a political activist. With other parents, she first sat for hours to meet with the Stokes County Schools Superintendent to oppose the actions of the Stokes Board. These parents further demonstrated that they could organize and oppose this outside interference. When the parents met to discuss the situation with attorneys at the Westfield School auditorium, she was the first person to come down the aisle and present a check to them for their retainer. She was then chosen along with Elsie Dearmin and Richard Hauser, to represent all the parents in the proceedings. These three were the only parents who actually met in the judge's chambers on the day of the hearing. As a result of the court action, the children involved were guaranteed the right to attend Westfield

Elementary and East Surry High School for the remainder of their public educations, but without the benefit of school transportation. The great majority met this challenge, many through the cooperative effort of car-pooling. As the years passed and a new generation of Stokes students attempted to enter Westfield, individual cases, such as Aunt Vera's grandchildren, were heard in court, but never again were the parents united.

As Aunt Vera pointed out, the situation was not one of school quality in Stokes vs. Surry, for she had begun her teaching career at Nancy Reynolds in Stokes County and knew that the Stokes schools were of comparable quality to those of Surry County. As she stated, her primary opposition to the action of the Stokes Board was the distance of about twenty miles from her home to North Stokes High School, as opposed to about ten miles to East Surry High School in Pilot Mountain. Apart from time spent traveling to and from these schools, these distances also meant increased safety considerations, unfamiliar persons, and less immediate contact. Her comments imply the perception of "others", those people outside her family and community. New people might endanger the integrity of the family, potentially her relationship with her granddaughters. Strangers might influence the community with differing mores and folkways. At the new Westfield School her granddaughters would be in contact

with many children from outside the Westfield Community, with whom Aunt Vera had no knowledge or contact. These influences might be even more enhanced in proportion to the distances away from the family and home community. All in all, the concerns with physical distances and outside influences represent a loss of Aunt Vera's personal control.

In her conversation, she related very little of her early life and family, but talked extensively about her immediate family, particularly her son and her granddaughters. She has been very devoted to them and their well-being. She has sought to keep him physically near. She assisted in purchasing my grandfather's home across the road from her own home, for Robert and his family. She kept her granddaughters as preschoolers at her home while her son and his wife worked and has always picked them up after school at Westfield and cared for them until their parents arrived. Because her granddaughters have always lived across the road from her, Aunt Vera has served not only as a sitter and grandmother for them, but in a real sense she has served as a surrogate mother while their parents worked. She has thoroughly enjoyed this role, not from a sense of duty, but for the great love she has for her granddaughters. Now that the girls are at the new Westfield School, they ride the bus after school to their father's school at East

Surry High in Pilot Mountain. When their father coaches girls' basketball, they might go to a new day care center where their mother, a former secretary at East Surry, is now employed. Thus, Aunt Vera will see less of them than at any time in their lives. Although the physical or political boundaries that exist for her school and community have often been problematic, they are not nearly so immediate and personal to her integrity as is her family cohesiveness. Her granddaughters' displacement to a new school will physically separate her from them and will tend to weaken her role as caretaker in their lives. In the sense that integrity is interrelated or defined by boundaries, this bond between herself and her granddaughters will weaken and thus be the greatest threat to Aunt Vera's integrity.

So it seems that the wholeness of the family is being compromised, if not threatened, and because of her great love and devotion to her son and grandchildren she was committed to a situation which would ensure their close physical presence. Her friendships in the community, her family's relationship to the community, her long association with the community school are all secondary to the love of her family and her connections to her child and grandchildren. To her, the family is central; the community exists more to help the family than as an end to itself.

As a teacher she served as a connection between the family and the community. She used the word "love" many times and her enthusiasm was evident throughout the interview. She made some professional remarks, especially in speaking of her early teaching experiences and in her prepared philosophical discourse. She perceived that the good is for her family to attend Westfield School. For them not to attend would be a violation of her integrity which might be related to a reduction in her sphere of influence. If this concept is true, then loss of community or loss of a community school is a loss of control. Because of the closeness and affection she so greatly desires with her family, separation from them is very painful to Aunt Vera.

Aunt Vera's prepared comments carefully pointed out each of the separate facilities on the Westfield School campus, their functions and sequence of building. Aunt Vera's career had encompassed the original 1929 structure expanded with two rooms in 1942, the financing and construction by the community members of the agricultural building in the early 1950s, the primary building in 1953, the gym in 1959, and the cafeteria in 1966. The fact that she carefully noted each, points to her pride in the school and its operational functions. However, she noted that although the original structure was very substandard, and the new school would be of superior quality in design

and materials, she doubted that the new school could match the love and care of the students that they had experienced at the old Westfield.

The personal and community traditions for Aunt Vera are noted in her comments not just about the physical plant or the curriculum, but in her description of the campus, seeing the flag flying, picking up her grandchildren and seeing other children playing after school, one of which she described in detail. These scenes certainly evoke old memories of her forty years of teaching in the building. It will be difficult for her to pass the empty building and campus. Certainly the lack of a school opening will be quite traumatic for her. The traditions of ball games, plays, musicals, parties, special lunches to which the retired teachers have been invited, Ruritan and fire department suppers and fund raisers--all these will cease to function on the campus. She will be less likely to see her granddaughters perform in school functions, as well as see other community children participate, due to the increased driving distances. Because she will not be keeping her granddaughters after school, she will have less immediate contact, through them, of the various school functions and connections.

The fact that she and several others taught for so many years in the building is one of the factors, along

with parental involvement, and local input which point to the operational functions of the school which tend to reinforce the mores and traditions of the community itself. "There is more love and caring in Westfield", speaks again to the sense of place, that Westfield has a particular kind of culture to it. Further, she and others, particularly those from Stokes County, will not meet as they once had to pick up their children and grandchildren after school to socialize with others, visit the post office across the road, visit the vegetable stand, or purchase gasoline or groceries at these times. She further points out the extra four mile drive to the new school site, which is much nearer to Pilot Mountain. She hints that children might then take the bus from the school to one of the day-care centers in Pilot Mountain, further reducing family interaction.

To Aunt Vera, the school was not just a building, but a living entity, with children and activities throughout the school year which will no longer be experienced by the community. Her hopes of continued use of the grounds and at least part of facilities, point to her desire not only for recreation itself, but in terms of continuity for community socialization. The fact that her son was an active participant in sports and is now a coach and English teacher at East Surry underlines the importance she places on these activities. She encouraged

his love of sports and saw that her son's participation in these activities, with his life-long friends, was being jeopardized by his potential removal from the community school. She noted these hopes for changes in the types of activities to be held on the campus more than curriculum changes that the children might experience at the new Westfield School and Pilot Mountain Middle School. In summary, Aunt Vera feels a certain pride in the Westfield School building, having taught there for forty years and having experienced the changes in its facilities.

Aunt Vera's comments point to the inevitable fact that she and other parents and residents of Westfield have, symbolically at least, lost a great part of their perceived autonomy. She spoke of her belief in a "democratic proposition" in which all of the community participates in deciding an issue. The decision to follow the middle-school concept was made by the superintendent and the Surry County Board of Education. The bond referendum of 1991 which was largely to refurbish Pilot Elementary as a middle school and build Shoals and Westfield Elementary was a county-wide vote in Surry County. Aunt Vera and other Stokes County residents could not participate. The majority of voters in the North Westfield Precinct, which includes most of the community and school district, opposed the bond. Aunt Vera's fears that "if they don't put something back in its place up

there for the community to be involved in, I think that we won't even realize that it is the same community" points to the issue of community vitality. She recognizes that the life of the community has been largely reflected in its school and without that institution, the community will change inexorably. The concept of community integration is reflected in her several references to "our" school. She sees the school as a centralizing for the community. Aunt Vera sincerely wishes "the best" for the children at the new schools, particularly her granddaughters, but sadly noted, "I'll miss our old Westfield School." She never expressed her concern for the academic quality of education that they would receive, but mourned the loss of the school to the community. Indeed, she implied that in the new and modern facilities, the children might prosper, and would perhaps make rapid adjustments. Nevertheless, she recognized that the Westfield Community boundaries and its integrity had been breached. I sensed in her comments a certain powerlessness that I did not see when she confronted the Stokes County Board of Education twenty years ago.

The concept of loss was dramatically stated by Aunt Vera in her prepared statement, in her cry of disbelief, "Say it isn't so!", which is often the first reaction that is experienced upon the death of a loved one. In her statement she noted the school as a center for community

activities and well as the closeness of the students and parents in the community with the school. Her comment "smooth it over" in discussing a student with a parent outside the school is not dispassionate or objective, but points to a concern for personal relationships that she has with that person, because she is connected in other ways than just the teacher-parent relationship. She used the phrase "special bond" which indicates a powerful connection as she further noted the loss of the students of Westfield High School in 1961 as grades 9-12 were consolidated at East Surry High School and the accompanying changes in parental involvement with two centers of interest. Carefully noted were the improvements and additions to the school. She mentioned "our" lunchroom which points again to the connection she feels with the buildings. She defines her life in part by the buildings and expresses her hopes for the future of the site for the community. Her voice broke and she wept softly twice while reading her comments and I sensed that she was mourning the loss of something very dear that she loved. The tears represented a deep emotional attachment, not a rational analysis of what is best for learning. Unlike more tangible factors such as possible loss of property values or distances to be traveled, her anguish reflected a more personal connection. In her prepared statement, there was no sense of anger or plan of

political action as the Stokes County situation of 1972 had evoked. Her statement seemed to reflect her resignation to the fact that the school had died as her voice cracked and she tried to hold back the tears: "There comes a time when we must decide to let go and turn the reins over to new and hopefully better days. I wish them the best, but I'll always miss our old Westfield School."

Roxie Hunter Payne Christian Interviews:
May 15 and May 20, 1993

On the morning before I interviewed Mrs. Roxie Hunter Payne Christian, she called me at 6:30 AM and told me that she had read my interviews with Mrs. Jessup and Aunt Vera and that she was afraid that she could not give me as much information as they had given me. I replied, "If someone who has been at Westfield School for fifty-five years can't tell me about the school and community, then who can?"

Mrs. Christian laughed and replied that I should come to her home on the following Saturday afternoon. When I arrived, she was alone, and seemed somewhat apprehensive. In order to put her more at ease, I began the conversation by asking about her interest in music. When we stopped the conversation two hours later due to my lack of recording tape, she told me that she had really

enjoyed the conversation and that I should come back and finish talking later in the week.

In order to establish the Quaker tradition continuing in Westfield, I asked Mrs. Christian about her early education.

"I first went to Mountain Park Institute, that was a junior college, and two years, junior and senior, of high school altogether. Mrs. Ethel Christian went there to high school." The Mountain Park community is in the western portion of Surry County approximately thirty miles due west of Westfield. Mountain Park Elementary School currently uses the old college building.

"When I finished school up here [Westfield High School] that was during the Depression. I finished in 1929 with no [graduation] exercise, that was when they tore down the old building. In the summer of 1929 they were going to build the new [current] building. There were just five students in the senior class, Jim Jessup, Woodrow Owens, Pete Shelton, Ethel Jessup, and me. They wanted to come back to the new school and go one more year in the fall of 1929 after they got it built that summer. I had always wanted to be a teacher, I've loved my teachers to death, all the way. I love reading. I thought that was just a year wasted for me if I could go somewhere else. The reason I chose Mountain Park Institute was because it was a very inexpensive school. I

don't know why I had that much nerve. I was shy, never had been away from home. I went to Mountain Park, and [to me] that was farther than going to Paris. I had never been there and never heard of it before. This girl was so homesick. Mr. Hauser had been my principal all during high school. Well, he heard about my being so homesick and he came by to see me and I begged and begged and begged him to let me come home [Westfield] with him. But he would not, he would not. But after that I began to get better and I finally got so that I enjoyed the place.

When I got up there they saw that Westfield High School was not accredited. Well, there was a stumbling block. But, they had two years of high school up there [Mountain Park Institute]. They called me in and talked to me and said that if I would take one subject they would count it as one more unit and let me finish [high school] from Mountain Park. I already had one diploma [Westfield High School]. I took piano lessons," she said laugh, "because of my love for music. I took the piano lessons, that gave me another credit and a diploma. So I have a diploma from Westfield and Mountain Park."

Mrs. Christian implied that the small junior college was severely strapped for funds. "That school was financed largely by contributions from up north; there was a man who would go up there and raise money to run that school. This was during the Depression and I had a time

getting the money myself to go during just that one year. The finances were so bad up there that year that they had to close the college part that year. Well, I didn't have a job and I wanted to go on somewhere else. I had always heard about Guilford, through the Quaker Church here. You see, we always used to be close with the Quaker church. When we [First Baptist Church of Westfield] had services only one Sunday a month, we would go down there almost as much as we would to our own church here, the Baptist Church. I think that was the reason I went. I didn't know about too many colleges, but I did know about Guilford. Mr. Hauser came to my rescue again. He advised me; he thought it was a good place to go. He carried me down to Guilford. He carried Ethel Jessup also, but Ethel backed out. He got me a fifty dollar scholarship down there. But you don't know how much that fifty dollars meant. Fifty dollars out of three-hundred, why that was 1/6 of my tuition! So I went to Guilford for one year and I loved the place, I dearly loved Guilford College! There is a little bit of Quaker in me. After I went to Guilford there was more Quaker in me. I liked that service we used to have when I went there. Sometimes we would all go to chapel and sit there with never a word spoken. You could meditate or whatever just as long as you kept it to yourself.

"Just before the end of the year my brother Royal called me and asked me if I was interested in teaching up here at Westfield. You see, I had two years of college. They had an opening, and I had a sister Erline, going to Westfield High School, and she was ready to graduate and she needed some money to go to school [college] on. My daddy had three hundred acres of land, but he had no money. He was land poor, and he couldn't sell land. We scraped up enough for me to go that one year, and she wanted and was ready to go to college herself. And I thought, 'Well, if I could teach, then maybe I could help finance her a little bit to get her started.' We were the only two at the end of the line of eight children. The others had not been to college, so we didn't know much about people going to college. I was the first one [in my family]. But anyway, I got Mrs. Ethel Christian's place [her husband Will's first wife] when she went out on a maternity leave. I went to Boone to summer school that summer. I was paid $76.50 for eight months. Then things got worse during the Depression and they cut our salary after my second year to $60.00 per month. After two years we began to get increases every year."

By this point in the conversation, Mrs. Christian had brought up many topics I wished to follow further. I asked her first how she developed her love of music.

"I'll have to tell you that then. There were three older boys, then five girls straight. They were John, my half-brother, then Royal, then Carl. Then comes Nonnie, Nina, Ellen, me and Erline. My daddy decided to get a Ford [automobile] for the boys to drive and do you know what he bought for the girls? A piano! He bought a big upright like that [pointing to one in her living room]. So from the day they put it in our house, I leaned against that stool and started at it. It was my great love. The others really didn't, but I did. The others were not interested. They wouldn't try to pick out a tune. But I would stand there until I could pick out some little tune. I was about five or six years old. Nobody cared for the piano expect me, and that was the gift to the five girls. Mrs. Ethel Pell was the only person in the community that knew much music. She had lessons somewhere. My father and mother paid her to teach the other four, for by then I played little tunes myself and they thought I didn't need any music lessons. But deep down, I was the one who needed the lessons because I liked it and they didn't. My parents thought they would like to play so they sent them to Mr. Rufe Simmons' to practice. Nonnie and Nina got so they could play a little bit. But Erline and Ellen, for as long as they live, they couldn't play 'Jimmy in a Shimmy-tail'!", Mrs. Christian said with a chuckle. "That's the truth, they couldn't play, they couldn't play

one thing. But I hung on to it, but I never had my first lesson until I went to Mountain Park because it was necessary to get my diploma up there. I knew I liked music, so it shouldn't be that hard, and it wasn't. But it was really fascinating to me to be able to read notes, that was the first experience I had ever had reading notes. When I came home at Christmas from Mountain Park, [my brother] Carl, who really liked to hear me play these jigs, asked me to sit down and play something now that I had had music lessons. So I sat down and played one of these little dull things like they used to give you. Nobody would listen to them.

"He said, 'Is that what you learned? Play "Over the Waves"!'. That was Dr. Smith's favorite.

"He would come to see my daddy when he was sick and he would say, 'Roxie, go in there and play "Over the Waves" for us.

"Carl thought it was disgusting that I had taken piano lessons and couldn't do anymore than that. When I went on to Guilford, I almost had the same experience. They said that Mountain Park was not accredited."

I suggested that a lot of people would have been discouraged at that point. "Yes, I know, but after you fight so hard to go, you're not going to give up that easily. And I loved the place, now I loved that place, really and truly. Everybody was so nice to me. I would

go down in the reception room and I would play those old "jiggy" pieces that I knew by heart, and they all made over me so! I loved the place."

I asked why she would play these "jiggy" pieces rather than more serious compositions.

"Because I liked them! Before I went to college, my sister Erline could out-Charleston anyone. She had long legs and could dance like anything you have ever seen. Well, my other sisters would have dates and they would call us in. 'Roxie, you play, "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby" and let Erline dance. She would make those heels pop on that floor like everything and I'd play. Now I could do the Charleston, too. I would get so perturbed because I wanted to show off so everyone would know that I could dance, too, but there was no one to play for me. So I would have to play every time for Erline to show Dr. Smith how she could dance. And I thought, 'Well, I'm stuck on this piano for the rest of my life, because nobody else will try," Mrs. Christian explained breaking into a hearty laughter.

"When I went to Guilford, it was fascinating for me to play a song by notes that I had never heard before. If I had heard one before, I could play it. This was something new to me. I decided that I would see if I could take piano at Guilford, too. There was the nicest lady, the sister-in-law of Dr. Noah, the greatest

conductor there has ever been. She taught piano there. They wanted you to take two lessons a week, but I didn't have enough money to take two lessons a week and go to school, too. I told her that I could not take but one lesson per week, but that would be all right, because I would just practice a lot. I think she thought I had a little talent, so she said, 'Roxie, now you needn't say anything about it, but I'm going to give you one lesson per week myself. I want you to have two lessons per week like everyone else. But you're not to pay me, because I'm just doing this for you.'

And she did. She was one more fine lady. I guess I brought on all this fifty years of playing in church by doing that. Because I could not have played for church, you know, if I had not learned to play by notes.

I then asked when she started playing for Westfield Baptist Church. "I think it was the fall that I started teaching. And I played for a few years over fifty. Once in a while we would have a pastor who had a wife who could play a little. If they could play, the pastors' wives would want to play. Illa Smith (Dr. Smith's daughter-in-law) would play sometimes. Other than that, I retired about three or four years ago."

I noted that Mrs. Christian was not only the pianist, but also the choir director, for I sang in that choir during my high school years. "Well, if you can call

it that", she said with a chuckle. "We didn't have that as such where you stand out and direct. But I did try to tell them what little I knew. Some of this was pretty crude stuff, I'm sure," she said laughingly, "but anyway, they didn't know any more than I did, so they couldn't criticize me much.

"At that time Mr. Hauser was the pastor. He was my teacher, principal, pastor, everything. Back then we only had one service a month. Later we began to have two services a month. I think that Reece Kiser was the first full-time pastor we had" [1956].

As we continued the conversation, into other areas, I wanted to return to the subject of music. Mrs. Christian commented, "You see, that [music] is my great love, reading and teaching little folks. The first year I taught there was a lady here who taught piano only, she was not paid by the state. After she left there was nobody left to play for anything up there. I had played a little in high school when they needed someone. Back when I was small, they would call on me to play. I remember one time they were getting up a play for the children and this lady left right in the middle of it. I had never heard the songs. Well, Ethel Pell and some of the other ladies called me to play. They would sing the song until I learned it. And then I would play it. That was the

beginning of playing back when I was a student at Westfield. I served as a back-up."

I wanted Mrs. Christian to talk about her leadership of the musical programs for so many years at Westfield. Having been a member of some of the performances in the first and second grades, as well as later years, I have often attributed my ability to speak in front of groups as having come from my earliest experiences on the stage at Westfield School. The students accepted being on the stage in performances as a part of their educational experience throughout their elementary and high school years.

"I first began playing for operettas. I played for high school graduations. I loved presenting musical programs. I would play for Mrs. Neal (English teacher) or anyone that would ask. I guess I missed a lot of time in my schoolroom, because of that, but I don't think it ever bothered [the academics] that much."

I asked Mrs. Christian if she agreed with my contention that being on the stage helped many students never to have the common fear of speaking or performing in front of groups. Much to my surprise, Mrs. Christian said that she had always had a problem speaking to groups. This statement came as a shock to me, for I had seen her programs at school and church for many years.

"Talking in front of a group has always been a problem for me. I can stand and sing all day and tell others what to do on the stage, in the choir, or whatever, but let me stand and talk in front of a group and I could just faint away. I always felt that I could get someone else, children, to speak in front of groups, and I did do that. That was one of the things I liked about teaching school. I liked to see the children doing those things. Now those were my happiest moments! We had the little rhythm band with sticks and bells, and I have that to dream about."

Turning the discussion back to her professional training, Mrs. Christian explained that she "went to summer school and we had some workshops at Mrs. Mycleta Hill's house (in Westfield) from Catawba College. Maybe six, eight or ten teachers would take these classes. Every summer either I went to Boone, or I took [extension] classes in Mount Airy or Dobson. Can you believe that Mallie Tilley drove up there? We all went up there just about all summer. But, that is the way we got our credit, and we stuck in there. Vera went to Boone some, and I went several summers.

"I had two years of college when I began teaching up here, but the experience I got, for the next four or five years, with these teachers with whom I was teaching and some of whom were my former teachers, these were

people who helped me along the way. I felt like that did me more good and helped me more in my teaching than if I had gone on two more years. There is nothing like experience. I had good help with my teachers. There was Mallie Tilley, Mr. Hauser, McCleyta Hill, Mary Neal, Mr. and Mrs. Ball, and they all helped me. They helped as much as two more years of college would have helped me. Mr. Hauser was really a big influence in my life. He stood behind me all the way. He thought I was smarter than I really was. He tried to push me. But he really thought I was smart, but I wasn't that smart, really."

Mrs. Christian taught both my parents, and me. She was also a fellow teacher during my first seven years of teaching. I am struck by the similarity of her comments and praise toward her fellow teachers as she began her first years as a teacher, which so closely parallels my experiences over forty years later. We both returned to teach with former teachers and give them much credit for their support, understanding, encouragement.

Mrs. Christian knew that part of my interest was in political issues and she volunteered the following information about her being hired as a teacher at Westfield School. "There was nothing political in that. Now Dr. Smith and I were on opposite sides [of the political fence] and so was Royal. Dr. Smith called Royal and asked if I was interested because they needed a

teacher. Well, I really didn't think I was prepared for it. I started teaching up here about my nineteenth birthday. That was young to take that [responsibility] on. I couldn't do that now. But then times were different.

"As I told you my politics [Republican] were different from Dr. Smith's [Democratic]. But I know politics did not enter into that [hiring] because he knew me well enough to know that I would do the best I could do, and that is all anyone can do. But there is one little incident that happened. I was in the restroom one day, and this teacher, I won't call her name, said, 'Roxie, we are taking up money for Dobson and would you like to contribute?'

And I said, 'No, I don't want to contribute because I am not of the same group that you are. I have nothing against what you are doing, but I don't think you should ask me.' And so, that was all there was to it."

I then asked Mrs. Christian if she thought that the central office in Dobson had as much control over the school when she started teaching as it does now. "I tell you the truth, I didn't know much about them up there then. We didn't see much of them, and we didn't get much from Dobson. We have always been on the tail-end of everything down at Westfield. It has been always hard for us to get our part, the same as the others [schools] got. Of course I think that part of that was being on this

[county line] down here, that everlasting Surry-Stokes line."

Realizing that this is a unique situation for a community, I then asked Mrs. Christian of her opinion about the situation. Her home place straddled the county line in Westfield. The house in which she was born lies in Stokes and her daughter built a house just a few yards beside it in Surry. Mrs. Christian's home is just a few hundred yards down Highway 89 in Stokes County.

"I think that it's a shame that it has affected our school like it has. That children could live here in sight of the school and not be able to attend it. I hate to say this, Rick, but I don't feel much of a part of Stokes County, I never have. I guess part of it is because I went to school in Surry, all my life, and then I taught in Surry all my life."

She noted that she grew up on the Stokes side, but that her daughter "Becky, thank goodness, got across the line. The line runs between the two houses up there. But thank goodness she's over there and didn't have this [situation] to contend with her boys like so many others."

I asked if the reason she built her house in that particular spot was so that it would be in Surry County. "Yes, it had a big part in it! Because there was really rough times going on back then [1972]. I wasn't as involved as Vera and some of the others who had children.

Becky had already come back to teach at Westfield while you went back to Chapel Hill to finish. I was not personally involved. Oh, but I heard the others and I felt for them. It was terrible, and its still terrible, what some of them have to go through. I have always thought we should have districts for schools instead of county lines. I still think that today. Somebody is going to live on that line and not be happy about where they are going to school. I guess that we have just been through so much that it has just been a sore spot with us. You hear a lot of talk from those on the other [Stokes] side. I'm in Stokes you know, and I can't say a whole lot. Nowadays, you don't know what might happen to you. People take things out on you because you see or maybe talk a certain way. So you have to be real careful about that. But I still think the boundary lines should be by district. Now I think you should have to go to the closest school. I'm not in favor of busing people a long way anyway. I know they have to be bused, but I don't believe in doing it unnecessarily. Just like somebody right here [on the Stokes side of Westfield], I've been where I can see Westfield School all my life. If I had a little one, I tell you, I would hate to send them yonder way [into Stokes County] on a bus. I don't have anything against Stokes Schools, and they have fine teachers and fine schools. But, I'm talking about the distance."

I then asked if she felt that it was important for the children who grew up here around Westfield to attend Westfield School. "Right, they are closest friends. Maybe you would be separated from your closest friends all through school. I just feel that it would just be best for everyone concerned if we could just forget these county lines. Everybody may not agree with me, but that's my opinion."

In order to strengthen her point and to provide me with some more historical background, Mrs. Christian shared some information with me on the family of John Lowe (1837-1929). She mentioned that he moved his family from a farm in Stokes County which adjoins my father's farm, to build a home in the center of Westfield, across Highway 89 from the First Baptist Church, for the sole purpose of allowing his children to attend Westfield School. She noted that she had an article from the Danbury Reporter attesting to his motives. He became a leading citizen of the community. Two of his granddaughters attended Guilford College, and his family later ran a general store and the Westfield Post Office.

Mrs. Christian noted that the feelings of loyalty and love felt about the school were similar to those felt about the church. "It's very much the same. You have that same feeling, I think. I do. In Westfield, I was reared where I could see Westfield School, with the church in

between. I have been where I could look at Westfield School all my life. I wouldn't trade that for anything. It is just killing me for our school to be moved. I am all for progress and I think that everybody is in a way, if it is better over there [new school site] and I hope that it is better over there. The only thing that it is going to hurt is some of us oldies that have been here all of our lives. We're going to miss it. But if we can do something here to keep our little community together and have a place to go to if we can get these buildings like some want to. If we can get those buildings, that will soothe us a little bit. Because we will be able to see our friends up there, because I like all of the activities they have up there, I like to go. I'm trying, although it hurts deep, to see that school go. My daughter and I have spent a total of 89 years at Westfield School. So you see why we feel as strongly as we do. It's part of my life. It really is. It has been a big part, too."

Mrs. Christian shared with me her Declamation Award, her graduation program for the Class of 1929 at Westfield High School, her class ring, her mother-in-law's report card from Westfield High School in 1890, her late sister Nonnie's class ring, her first teaching contract, and a report card from the elementary grades Westfield for 1903. She noted that one of the judges in the contest was Mrs. R. T. Joyce who built the house next door. Her

husband ran a mill on Dan River and ran the first electric power line to Westfield to his home and to the school. The old school bell was given by him and was placed in a brick casing approximately 20 years ago at the lower entrance to Westfield School below the cafeteria. Many of the faculty hope to take the bell and the clock in the auditorium to the new school. Mrs. Christian and her husband Will also described the frame building that preceded the current building with classrooms on the first floor and an auditorium and living quarters for the principal on the second floor.

Mrs. Christian invited me to come back and finish our conversation later in the same week. She told me that she had really enjoyed our conversation and that she enjoyed having the opportunity to relate some of her experiences. We met on a day when her husband, Will Christian and Uncle Bryan Smith were visiting Will's son, Bill, who is terminally ill with cancer in Virginia. It is interesting to note that when Mrs. Christian was first employed at Westfield in 1931, Will's first wife, Ethel Hall Christian went out on maternity leave for the birth of Bill.

We began with a discussion of living and teaching in the same community. "Personally, speaking for myself, and this probably would not apply to everyone," Mrs. Christian said with a laugh, "but I think there's an

advantage, it was in my case. Because I knew all the people in the community and all of the families. Of course my folks [family] knew people back farther than that. I felt like I could communicate with them better by knowing them, than with a total stranger. [In that case] I would have to feel my way, sometimes you have to feel your way, as to what you are going to say to someone if you don't know them, if you don't know their background. So, for me it was an advantage. But, as I say, for some people, they might just see it differently."

I explained to Mrs. Christian, that I was very interested in her opinions, and not so much in the opinions of others. I paraphrased her comments to ask then if she ever saw any conflict living and teaching in the same community. "I didn't, I didn't in my case at all. In fact, as I said, I think it really helped me to understand the students and come to know what to expect from certain families. There were families, for example, where I knew their background. Maybe they were having a hard time. I wouldn't know anything about that if I were a stranger. And in my family, we would talk over things. We knew a lot about everybody, I mean it was discussed. Their circumstances and so on, so for me, I think it really helped me out."

I surmised that since her father's and mother's families had been here for generations that they and she

had come to know most of the families in Westfield. I then asked whether by the time she retired, she had not taught some of the grandchildren of her first students.

"I did. Eula Mae Vaughn for example. I taught her, and I taught her daughter [Janie] and her son [Lee Moss], a student at the NC School of Science and Mathematics. I have to tell you a little story about what happened not too long before I retired. One day one of the children spoke up and said, 'You have been teaching forever!'

I said, 'Yes, it seems like that sometimes.'

This one little boy spoke up and said, 'You taught my mama.' They went around the room and different ones spoke up.

Then this little Lee Moss said, "That's nothing. She's teaching me, she taught my mama, and she taught my grandma, too!"

I then interjected that I remembered teaching Lee also in the same class with Mrs. Christian's grandson, David Smith. So she not only taught her daughter but one of her grandsons at well!

"Right. Especially down in the lower grades you would have to have been there for a long time, because they have to grow up, get married and have children before you can get back to the grandchildren!" she said laughing.

Since we were discussing her grandson, I then asked if there were any problems in teaching her own daughter in school. "Well, she was in another good class, it just happened to be. Now Becky never took advantage of being my daughter, because she never referred to me as 'Mama.' While she was in my room, she called me 'Mrs. Payne,' just like everyone else. But as she got out of my room and got on up higher, she would forget and say 'Mama'; she didn't mind it then. But when she was in my room, she never called me, 'Mama,' it was always, 'Mrs. Payne,' just like all the other children. I would expect that it would have been easier on her if she had been in another class. I think that it is bad that you have to do that, but we only had one second grade and I had to have her. But it happened to be a good class with a lot of good students, and so she had a lot of competition. But one advantage was that it showed me what she was capable of doing. After I had her, I knew what to expect from her later years. Sometimes they pull that on you, and don't want to work. Becky never once ever considered anything else but teaching. It was just taken for granted in our house that she would go to college and teach school."

I then asked Mrs. Christian a question that I had never presumed to ask her before. Why had she had never acquired her driver's license? Mrs. Christian laughed heartily and said, "Are you taping this?"

I replied that I was, but would turn off the recorder if she preferred.

"No, that's all right. I don't know, but there was some fear. Now I love children better than anything in this world. I just had a horror of having a wreck. I never thought about having a wreck and causing an older person to be killed, that I caused, but I always felt like I just couldn't drive. I would start to, then I would back off. I was afraid I would have a wreck. I wasn't worried about myself, but I was afraid that I would kill someone else. I just couldn't do it. Now I want to tell you, I have stayed home many a time when I wanted to go somewhere because I didn't have a way. I would have to wait for someone to drive me. I would advise anyone to go get one [drivers' license], I'll tell you right now!" she said with a chuckle.

I noted that when she was first married she lived at her husband's homeplace only about a mile down Highway 89 in Stokes County from the school, and her husband, Tommy Payne, would bring her to school. When they built this present house in 1955, she was within walking distance again of Westfield School as she had been at her homeplace.

"I'll have to tell you about walking to school. All the years, all my life I wanted to take my lunch to school. Never did I get to take my lunch to school. We

went home every day for lunch. We had an hour for lunch when I was in school. I always felt as though I missed something by not taking that cold lunch," she said as she laughed, " and having a good time eating with everyone else."

So I noted that she had just grown up right here in the center of Westfield. "And I've stayed here. I say sometimes that that sounds like a monotonous life, dull, but it has not been. Anytime you work with children, it is not going to be dull, it's not going to be dull working with children, if you like what you are doing. You have to like what you are doing, too."

Mrs. Payne, who was so courageous and showed such leadership in directing musicals, operettas, plays and pageants at both school and church, and being the first in her family to go away to college, had surprised me by saying that she was fearful of both public speaking and driving an automobile.

We then discussed the future of the community without the school. "To make progress and grow we have to have some changes. I realize that you have to have change and do what is best for the children. I just hope that we know what we are doing. I hope that it will turn out that way and that we will all go over there to that school [new Westfield School] and be involved all we can. But it's just a feeling that I have, that it has been such a part

of my life, that that part is going to be kind of empty. I think that we have some good buildings up here. If we [community] can get hold of them and put them to good use, through the Ruritan Club, the fire department, and really keep the children in this community together, it will help them, and it will help the whole community. Now that lunchroom is a nice place for different groups to meet. If we can just get those buildings, that will help a lot. I don't know what they will do with the main building; it needs tearing down I think. It's a mess, you know that, too."

I then asked Mrs. Christian if she thought there would be any educational advantages for the children at the new Westfield School. "Well, I really don't know. I hope so, since we're going to all of this trouble to get the new building over there. But it will depend on the teachers a whole lot, and the principal."

I commented that the Westfield faculty was visiting the new school for the first time today. "Well, good. I think that it all depends on the other teachers from the other places coming in. If they all get along. Now it could be the other way. They will have to make a big effort for everybody to work together and make a new school over there."

We then discussed the children in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades going to the new Pilot Mountain

Middle School. "I don't know that much about middle schools to tell you the truth, I really don't. I think it could be an advantage, but I just really don't know that much about a middle school."

I commented that perhaps the Surry County Schools central office had not done a very good job about educating the public of the middle school concept. "You're right, you're right. I don't think they do."

We then talked about the loss of Westfield School. "It's up to all of us now to get in there. It's going to be gone and we must make the best of it because of the children. Now we will have to forget our feelings about it, you know."

Mrs. Christian had seen a write-up of my conversation with Aunt Vera, and she too, decided to write down a few parting words and read these comments aloud:

"As I look over the years I have no regrets about becoming a teacher in 1931-1932 at Westfield School. I still have such fond memories of all of those wonderful boys and girls that were such a big part of my life and all the teachers with whom I worked through the years. Now we are losing Westfield School as a community school, eighteen years after I retired in 1975. It hurts, I mean it really hurts deep down. It was such a big part of my life for fifty-five years as student and teacher. I am not too old yet to realize that we grow stagnant if we

stand still and try to live in the past. The world will soon pass us by if we do that. Progress and growth require change. As one of the 'oldies', I will try my best to accept and enjoy the new Westfield School, although I will never again be able to look out and say, 'that is my Westfield School.'"

On this visit, Mrs. Christian shared with me some clippings that she had saved from the "Yesteryear" column of the Danbury Reporter from the 1920s. She also shared a feature page on Westfield from the Mount Airy News from approximately 1978. She showed me a picture of the original Westfield Baptist Church. It was torn down by Sam Dearmin and reassembled as a barn and still stands in Johnstown, just down the road in Stokes County. She also showed her gross paycheck stub from 1940 of $128.00. She reminded me again that she began teaching in 1931 at $76.50 per month until 1933 when all salaries were cut and she received $60.00 per month for two years.

Mrs. Roxie Hunter Payne Christian: Interview Interpretation. Mrs. Roxie Hunter Payne Christian speaks to the pride of place. Having lived all her life within approximately one mile of her birthplace, Mrs. Christian epitomizes the community school teacher. Having been both youth and adult leader at The First Baptist Church of Westfield and Westfield School, Mrs. Christian symbolizes the duty and devotion to these institutions that she feels

is necessary for community life. She integrates the church/school connection in the history of the community. Among her many examples of community unity, is her recollection of her principal and pastor, Mr. O.H. Hauser, who came to visit and encourage her when she was a homesick freshman at Mountain Park Junior College, and thus symbolized a community cohesiveness that is rarely found in today's society. Her life has largely been one of personal intervention enabled by a small community, a small scale. She uses the words "they," "them" and "theirs" many times, not as synonymous with the concept of "others," but in an individualized, personalized context. In referring to parents she says she "could communicate better knowing them" and similarly with local students she could "know their background." Her disclosure of personal connections gives a personal quality to her discourse. She knows everybody by name. She talks in terms of people rather than of educational issues such as curriculum, the psychology of education, or even of her career. Her discussion about the school is a function of her personal relationships.

In terms of place, the concept of scale is also important to her connections. In order to maintain close personal relationships,one's place must be relatively small. The connection between personal relationships and the scale of place is also reflected in the revelation of

her shyness, which would be more evident in a larger world, a larger place. Her place is a relatively small world with intimate relationships. Her early fears of being away from home and speaking in front of groups reflect this shyness and since she never learned to drive a car, her scale of space was further limited. Therefore, her world has comprised the area to which she could walk and the people whom she knew. This is in contrast to the professional, bureaucratic notion that regardless of the place or space involved, educational issues have a commonality that can be discussed by all educators. In summary, Mrs. Christian's world is fairly constant, relatively small, and based on personal relationships. Her world is shaped by her space, its scale and intimacy.

Her concept of place does not differentiate among the community, the school and church. Her early attendance at both Westfield Friends Church and The First Baptist Church of Westfield have profoundly influenced her life, although she does not perceive these as boundaries. She was a life-long member of the Baptist faith, but it was the Quakers who influenced her decision to attend Guilford College. The fact that most residents in Westfield attended both churches regularly, as well as others, until less than forty years ago, implies tolerance and understanding as well as unity. Moreover, the people of Westfield have a common heritage that transcends

political boundaries. Although questioned about political divisions in her early years of teaching, Mrs. Christian noted that while personalities in the Democratic and Republican parties differed, there was a common unity in the desire for the best interests of the school. The people of Westfield have a similar family, religious, ethnic, and economic background that has developed over the two-hundred year history of the community.

Mrs. Christian has always been acutely aware of the line that separates Surry and Stokes Counties through the Westfield Community for it runs through her father's farm, part of which faces the Westfield Baptist Church across Highway 89. However, Stokes County is not her place. Mrs. Christian's comments about not really feeling a part of Stokes County, although she has lived there all her life, speak to the ambivalence many Westfield residents feel. Having walked to Westfield School in Surry County, and then home for lunch, and having always lived within sight of the school, Mrs. Christian was perplexed that a county line could disallow students from attending a school within sight. Her alternative solution, that school attendance areas be defined by school districts rather than county lines, reflects an often wished desire held by many Westfield residents.

Her family was not directly affected by the 1972 Stokes County situation, for her grown daughter had

returned a few months earlier to teach at Westfield. She and her husband built their home on Mrs. Christian's homeplace, but on the Surry County portion. Mrs. Christian was nonetheless compassionate in her understanding of Aunt Vera's problem, as well as others in Stokes County with children in school at Westfield at the time. She saw the distances to the Stokes County schools as presenting great difficulties, thus indicating her perception of the scale of her place. Perhaps her greatest concern was for those who had grown up in Westfield who would be separated from their friends.

The concerns she expressed for those affected by the Stokes County situation are the reflections of a lady who lives only a few hundred yards from her homeplace, church, and school, all of which are interrelated. Her comments noting her lifetime proximity to these three seem to make the loss of one of these all the more painful. These three institutions are central not only to her personal integrity but to the community as well. Without any one of these, the community is incomplete, as is the life of Mrs. Christian. She had not only attended the school as a student, but spent her entire career of an additional forty-four years solely at Westfield School. Her sense of duty and loyalty, both as a professional and as a community member in her service to both the church and the school for over half of a century, demonstrates

that Mrs. Christian sees her role as a teacher and church leader as defining her integrity. This vast length of service has, in itself, given continuity to her life as well as to the life of the community. She has taught several members of her third-generation of students. This very powerful intergenerational theme is repeated in such comments as "you taught my mother," "you taught my grandmother." Here the importance of not only place but also of time is reflected. The concept of "time takes place" is applicable, for throughout her comments, real time is measured from generation to generation in terms of place. Mrs. Lena Smith's comments about families such as the Paynes and Smiths serving as teachers over several generations at Westfield School also reflect the notion of time taking place. Moreover, his span of service has given a predictability to the community. Parents and even grandparents, having personally experienced Mrs. Christian's classroom, were comfortable in knowing what to expect when a new generation entered Westfield. Even in Mrs. Christian's retirement, her daughter is seen by the community as extending the role of both teacher and church leader.

The closing of the school, however has shattered this stability. To Mrs. Christian, the cohesiveness of her life's work has been disrupted, for her position as a teacher no longer exists, as the school itself no longer

exists. Her legacy of the many musicals and plays she sponsored will not be carried over to the new school to which new teachers, students, and parents from other communities will also bring their traditions. The familiarity and intimacy that she experienced with Westfield School can no longer be shared by her with members of the community.

Mrs. Christian's comments also give insight into the issue of fragmentation. In modern society, persons can frequently be defined as educators, civic leaders, church members and so on. However, Mrs. Christian sees no such fragmentation. For her, the school, the church, her family and friends are all of a piece. Her authenticity is defined in terms of the integration of all of these. One leads to the other without clearly delineated boundaries. For her to be connected to the people of the community, Mrs. Christian uses her music, her church, and her school. She refers frequently to her music and the children with the word "love." She defines herself as a person who loves people, who lives in the community, and only happens to be a teacher. This can be contrasted with the notion of a teacher who comes to live in a community in the example given by Mrs. Bernice Lowe. Van Dearmin, the middle school principal, is also very concerned with people, but he seeks a different orientation in which the outside community is brought in to supplement the school.

The professionalization of teachers has often been designed to remove people from that consciousness. Mrs. Christian sees the school as a part of the community, not alienated from the community. Therefore she sees the school in an opposite, though not contradictory, view that is different from the notions held by most professionals.

The community school is important as an academic institution for Mrs. Christian who from an early age wanted to teach there, and nurtured this desire in her daughter. However great her strengths and influences upon three generations of children, she does not reflect upon academic concerns. Perhaps she takes academic excellence, and her professional abilities as given values, and concentrates her discussion on other issues. Commenting on the loss of the school she said, "I will never again be able to look out and say, 'that is my Westfield School.'" Her implication of possession, of ownership, is derived from her investment of many years of service, and this reference is indicative of a very strong personal identification.

Mrs. Christian attended school in a building located on the present site of the community school. She began teaching in the building when it was just two years old, and now sees it as an abandoned, outdated, outmoded structure. Because it was within walking distance for her for most of her life and lies in the center of the

community, the building itself, apart from its academic or symbolic functions, is an integral part of her life, a place with which Mrs. Christian has identified herself as being from, beginning at the age of five until the age of sixty. It symbolizes her devotion and duty to the education of the community youth and service to the community itself. It represents not only her early education but also her entire teaching career, and therefore an one integral part of her whole life. Indeed, perhaps it is a misnomer to even speak of her "teaching career." Mrs. Christian is not just talking about her teaching career, but her life. Although I initiated the conversation based on her teaching experience, she told me of her life, of who she was as a person, to describe how she defines herself. Just as she noted that a former student told her "you should write a book," these conversations were largely composed of her life experiences, of which the school is an integral part.

The location of Westfield on the county line was also noted by Mrs. Christian as one reason that, in her early years of teaching, there was little contact with the central office in Dobson. Comments such as "he knew me well enough to hire me," indicate a personal intervention on a smaller scale than is common in most school systems today in which lack of personal knowledge of an applicant

is considered an advantage as it allows more objectivity. Her comments also imply the central office had little influence upon the day-to-day affairs of the school. This independence must have been even more pronounced in earlier years, for telephone service was not begun in Westfield until 1957. The musical programs she referred to were planned and presented largely as a community function, rather than as a part of a standardized curriculum, illustrating again that in earlier years, particularly with a local school board, the community autonomy was much greater than today.

She spoke in the personal and concrete rather than abstract terms; for example, concerning her original employment, Dr. Tom Smith, the local school committee chairperson, "knew me well enough to hire me" and spoke to her brother, Royal, to invite her to come home from Guilford College to teach. She spoke of those teachers who "helped me" rather than talking of peer supervision. Mrs. Christian recognizes that the community will be changed by the movement of the school. She is unsure as to the future changes, but suggests that if the buildings on the campus can be put to use as meeting places or recreational facilities, Westfield will continue to be viable. Perhaps even more important, she is holding on to this possibility so that her lifestyle will continue. Due to the fact that Mrs. Christian's ancestors attended and

taught at the community school, as did many other relatives including her daughter, her grandsons, and countless friends and neighbors, her fifty-five years of active involvement cause her to perceive Westfield School as the community's most central and focal organization.

Mrs. Christian recognizes her lack of personal control in her desire to keep the community school. She categorizes herself as one of the "oldies" who should not stand in the way of progress. While it is true that because she is retired and lives in Stokes County her influence on the future of the community school in Surry County is diminished, I was surprised that someone of her personal character and reputation would imply that she feared being more outspoken for fear of some reprisal from unidentified others. Perhaps this speaks again to her shyness, her space in her place, and is a dialectic. In a small community one's security comes largely from knowing everyone. She is speaking of a situation in which her scale of place is threatened.

One of the most important traditions in the history of Westfield School is its musical heritage, a large part of which can be attributed to Mrs. Christian. Thousands of boys and girls have enjoyed playing in her rhythm band or toy orchestra which consisting of blocks, sticks, bells, or other simple instruments which were played to (then) Mrs. Payne's piano accompaniment. She also

organized school-wide operettas for many years. She enlisted the help of community members for costumes and scenery and these performances were always a highlight of the school year. She also assisted in talent shows, Christmas plays, PTA performances, and other events. Perhaps one the most delightful and poignant events at the final Westfield High School Alumni meeting in May, 1993 was the playing of these instruments by adults ranging in age from their late forties to sixties, while the audience sang and Mrs. Christian accompanied them once again at the piano.

At an earlier reunion in 1981, as moderator on stage, I wanted to begin the program, but was unable through repeated requests over the speaker system to entice the audience to be seated. I signalled this dilemma to Mrs. Christian who was seated in the front of the stage at the piano. She smiled, nodded, and began to play a march. As if on cue, a hush fell over the auditorium and alumni even in their eighties proceeded down the aisles to their assigned seats according to their year of graduation. She later explained that this remarkable music was a march which she played for fire drills during the years before the school had an alarm system that was installed in 1957!

The concept of loss as a result of the school reorganization was given by Mrs. Christian in comments she

had written before my conversation with her. She noted the hurt she feels, but also believes that it is futile to live in the past for change is inevitable. Her resignation and acceptance of the loss reflects not only the passing of a community school, but also a way of life.

Mrs. Ersie Pell McIntyre Interview,
May 27 and May 31, 1993

I called Mrs. McIntyre before our interview in order to confirm our time. She told me to tell the superintendent, Glenn Cook, that she would bake him a pound cake for giving me permission to leave the central office early.

We began our conversation with Mrs. McIntyre's early background.

"I've lived at this particular homeplace all of my life except for a few summers and winters while I was away at school [college]. My husband and I kept an apartment for about four years in Greensboro. We would spend weekends there, but otherwise I have more or less lived here.

"I think that I always wanted to be a teacher, because my mother was a teacher. My Grandmother Matthews was a teacher; my Granddaddy Pell, even though I never knew him, taught and was a preacher who taught at Westfield near Brim's Grove Church. He also used the

one-room school for Quaker meetings. My mother was a former school teacher, so she kept us pinned down a little bit, maybe better than the average [child], I'm not sure. We had a huge country kitchen in the house at the time. We sat around the fire while she cooked supper and did the dishes."

I asked how many siblings she had and whether any of them went into education. "We had two boys and two girls. It was assumed that my sister and I would go to college. She married as a senior, and it seemed to me that the idea of my going died. Money was very, very scarce at the time. So I worked in a mill for a year to get enough money to start college. Probably that helped me more than it hindered, because if someone told me that I couldn't do a thing I always did it, unless they said, 'Sing a song,' because I can't carry a tune," she said with a smile.

"I was determined to go to school, and I did. I did not ask my daddy for a dime any of the time. My mother had the money and insisted that I go. But daddy did not want me to take the money. He said, 'What if you can't pay it back?'

"So I got a job at Amos and Smith in Pilot Mountain and worked fifteen months and then went to school. I washed dishes, I baby-sat, I typed papers, I did anything under the sun. At that time typed pages were five cents,

a copy was seven cents, two copies were ten cents. I typed many term papers just to get a little extra money. I worked in the cafeteria at High Point College for my meals. I had had a couple of tobacco crops, but Daddy would not let me use the money to go school on. It was just hard. They didn't really believe back then in girls [going to college], but he was proud of me before it was over with! He then begged me to take some money from him, but I never would.

"When I came home in the winter Mr. Beck [of Amos and Smith Hosiery], who became a good friend of mine, told me that they were going to make a floorlady when I gave them my two-week notice and told them that I wanted to go to college. He let me work. We had a long vacation. Sometimes I would work eighteen hours a day at Christmas time, and I would work a month or more. They would always be behind at Christmas. I could pair hose (I was skinny then and had long hands) like nobody's business! Nobody liked eleven and one-halves, but I could do them [easily), and he would let me work as many hours as I wanted. That [money] would go a long way, because school was cheap back then.

"My family does not like for me to tell this, but back then it just wasn't a day that women went to school. I felt like Rena [sister] was the smart one, although I was the good math student. She was good in English. I

always had a lot of curiosity about learning. When my [older] sister could read, and she wouldn't read me the Sunday funny papers, I just couldn't stand it! I went to work to learn to read on my own. I guess my mother helped me a little. My mother owned a set of encyclopedias, that she had bought for her use. My grandfather didn't want her brother, my Uncle Walter Matthews, to go to college. He was the only boy, and he wanted him to stay and help him to farm."

Knowing that Mr. Walter was the founder of Farmer's Bank in Pilot Mountain, a member of my Masonic Lodge, chairman of the local high school committee for many years, a prominent member of my church, who had died only three years ago at the age of ninety-five, I asked Mrs. McIntyre to discuss him. "He went to Chapel Hill, then he nearly died in France in World War I; he may have taught a year and then went into banking. He was always sympathetic to education."

I commented that even though her Uncle Walter was a bank president, she did not seek funds from anyone for her college education. "If you can imagine! I had not been anywhere! I was frighten to borrow the money. If I didn't make it in school, it would be up to me to pay it back. That was frightening. Anyway I scrambled around and got through college.

"I worked at Amos and Smith, and for those times, I thought I was making good money. I stayed at home, I had no way to get there. Erastus Vaughn [a fellow member of Westfield Friends Church] came through here on his way to Pilot and picked me up."

I asked, "You mean you didn't drive to Pilot Mountain?"

"No," she replied, "we had a car in the family, but the boys drove it, the girls didn't, not until I bought one. I have paid every penny on every car I have ever owned."

"When did you get your first car?" I asked.

"After I had taught for a couple of years. You were not supposed to, but I rode the [school] bus, but they [school administration] stopped that. I can remember when Vera rode the bus. When I first started teaching only two or three teachers, usually the men, had an automobile. We couldn't afford one."

I then asked her about her beginning teaching at Nancy Reynolds. "When I was in the fifth grade, me moved to Westfield and stayed for a year or so. Our home had burned. The school [transportation] conditions were poor. We had to walk home half the time, about eight miles. So he bought the place where Grant Christian lives and we moved up there for a couple of years. We enjoyed living there. We lived about a mile and a half from the school

and we enjoyed walking with the others to school, the Christians, Will, Irvin, Hilda, Charles, Sam and Foster, unless the weather was really bad. We all had a good time walking together. That house later burned and we came back down here and lived in another house until we built this one. We sold that place to your Uncle Numa Christian. Rena and I later returned to finish as seniors [at Westfield High School].

I mentioned that I thought her sister was three years older.

"I had caught up with her. I liked to read, and I couldn't stand for someone to be able to do something that I couldn't do. I really went to work on that [reading]. I was going to excel in reading, and I did, I think. So, I knew all the books. When she brought them home, I read them. In my first few days of school, they called in Mr. Dutton, the principal to listen to me read. I really, really didn't know, I was immature, but she told me to take my lunch and my books and go to second grade. I was out in the hall crying, because I didn't know what that meant, I thought she didn't like me, and the other teacher had not come after me. They wouldn't do that now. Irene Hunter came by to ask why I was crying. I told her that the teacher had sent me out of the room and told me to go to another room. The only thing I could think of was that I had done something, but I didn't know what, and she was

sending me where my sister was. But Irene checked into it and said, 'Come on I'll go with you, it's all right.' So I caught up with Rena that way. Which wasn't good, we were in the same grade, we competed with one another. She did better in English and I did a lot better in math."

I inquired again as to the age difference, by noting that her sister was almost three years older.

"I started a year early" Mrs. McIntyrye laughed, "you know how you could do then. I was dying to go to school so I started at age five. Then I skipped a grade. Now you couldn't do that."

I inquired as to why she chose to go to High Point College. "It was a little cheaper. They agreed to let me do the work that I did, like working in the cafeteria, library, or anywhere there was an hour's work to do for a quarter. I got my food knocked off. I helped Mrs. Sperry, who was our housemother, and got some of that knocked off. It didn't cost all that much. But if you didn't have anything, [the extra financial assistance] meant a whole lot."

She noted that she finished her college work in three years, and later finished in the summers for her four-year degree. She began teaching at Nancy Reyolds in Stokes County in 1947 and taught there for two years and then two years at Pinnacle, also in Stokes County just south of Pilot Mountain, then back to Nancy Reynolds.

When I asked her if she remembered her beginning salary, she very emphatically said, "I can remember exactly. It was $60.00. I lacked a course or two, so Raleigh said, practice teaching or something. I got that the next year and made $97.00 per month for three or four years. Then I thought it was great when we got a raise and I made a whole $127.00 after about four years of teaching. It was really ironic after I got my master's degree. You were supposed to make $25.00 per month more, but that put me in another tax bracket and I actually got $5.00 more."

Mrs. McIntyre was married in 1953 and started working on her master's degree. "I found out later that not any woman in Stokes County had a master's degree at that time. Not all of the principals did, but my principal, Mr. Barber was working on his. In that day nobody observed teachers, but he suddenly appeared in my room, because as soon as I finished collecting lunch money, I taught reading. He came in and went to back of the room and sat down. I saw that he meant to stay and I asked him. He said, 'Yes, Ma'am'. So I handed him a reader and we went on. So to my surprise, almost horror, he appeared again the next morning and did the same thing for three weeks. Everyone in school knew this and it was rumored, 'What in the world has Miss Pell done?' But I decided that I was doing the best that I could and I would

just let him listen or whatever. The children grew to enjoy it. But after three weeks he told me that he was doing a study of reading for Dr. McNutt. He showed me the paper that he had written. When he turned in his paper he came back with the information that Dr. McNutt insisted that I come down and visit with the class which consisted of mostly principals. The best I remember there was not a woman in the class. They were al men working on their master's degrees. So Mr. Barber and Dr. McNutt told me that I was wasting my time if I didn't work on the master's. Nobody else did, and I kept thinking that I couldn't do it; I was lucky to get through school. So finally Mr. Barber came by one day and told me that he had thought about it and that maybe the best thing for me to do was not to go. I think he knew how a challenge like that would affect me. So I made up my mind and decided, "I'll show you." So I enrolled in the spring of 1952. I got married the next year and did not go back. Then I played along a year or two. I wasn't concentrating on going to school. Maybe I would just go for six weeks or something. But anyway I pinned down and finished my coursework in 1956 and got my degree in 1957. It ended up that Dr. McNutt had a home in back of where my husband had a farm. He was my advisor and ever so often we would get together, at the new Alamance Presbyterian Church, in

Guilford County, seven or eight miles from the Jefferson-Standard Building.

"In 1964 Mrs. Grace Rodenbough retired as elementary supervisor in Stokes County. They were discussing among the principals of going outside [the county for her successor]. Mr. Barber commented that he had the best elementary teacher in the county and that she had a master's degree." Subsequently, Mrs. McIntyre was then hired as elementary supervisor for grades one through eight in Stokes County.

"It wasn't anytime until I was assigned special areas. I'm not saying that they recognized that I knew what I was doing, but they were beginning to work with freshman and sophomore classes in reading. So I started working with those teachers too at the libraries.

"I had the opportunity to go to Surry County Schools in 1967. My husband's condition was deteriorating. The roads were so crooked, and it seemed that I would end up at the other side of Stokes County every day. So I went to Surry County.

"Dr. Swanson Richards [President of Surry Community College] goes to the Methodist Church now, but he was brought up a Quaker, and I knew him really well. Every now and then we would confer about things. Mr. Herman Griffin [then principal at Pilot Mountain School] thought that he hired me, but Dr. Richards mentioned that there

was going to be an opening in Surry County and inquired if I was interested. I said, 'You'd better believe that I am!' He told me that if I would have an office and work with Herman at Pilot for one year, that Mrs. Hines [Surry County Elementary Supervisor] was going to retire the next year. So I got the same pay and was classified as a supervisor, but I just helped with two special projects at Pilot Mountain and went to Franklin School some. Then Mrs. Hines retired and I took over her duties in the school term of 1967-68. My husband Robert passed away in the spring of 1968. The next year I was in Dobson [Surry County Schools Central Office] and remained there until I retired."

Mrs. McIntyre enjoyed working at Pilot Mountain with Herman Griffin. She noted that she and Mr. Griffin should have quit their jobs and started writing books. The Scott-Foresman lady was there and saw that we tried to think of ways to help the children who were having trouble in primary reading. We recorded these on tape, like we are doing now. We would then let them look at the books as that was being played to them. Now you can buy these, as you could have for years and years. We then laughed about it and said that if we had had sense enough to quit [their jobs] and start doing what we were doing over there. People would come to observe, then they would go back and do it.

Mrs. McIntyre is a life-long member of Westfield Friends Church. Her father and his family had always belonged to the meeting, and she told me that after their marriage, her mother also joined. Her Grandfather Pell taught at the church school prior to her own father's birth in 1881. She also noted that her Grandfather was there prior to Ellen Minthorne's arrival after the Civil War.

"President Hoover himself sent us [Westfield Friends Meeting] some money for a piano. Every once in awhile he would send us money as a donation because his Aunt Ellen had taught there."

She averred that the Quaker influence in Westfield. "Several educators have said that to me over the years that [Westfield Friends] was one of the two schools that always had the highest averages at that time. He felt it was because their parents were so interested in their children." She noted that the late J. Sam Gentry, Superintendent of Surry County Schools, "had often remarked that parents supported the children more at Westfield and White Plains more than any of the other schools. They were both Quaker communities. They were interested. They may have been [only] farmers, but Mr. Gentry noted that they were backing up their children steadily.

"One day we got to talking about it and Mr. Graham said that he didn't see why White Plains was considered, it was going backwards. And I said, 'Why don't you know Mr. Graham? You're the Associate Superintendent, go to ride with me and I'll show you. Dr. Huffman [recently retired at Associate Superintendent] went to school there. They have that Quaker, close-knit community. Now they've got those trailers parks outlying there. I have been working with some of those kids from West Virginia and they don't know beans. And I said, and I remember how Mr. Gentry laughed, 'The same thing is going to happen at Westfield.' They have those trailers coming in. So far they have held up [the community standards], but sooner or later it is going to happen; they won't have that sturdy community that they used to have. Mr. Gentry laughed over that for a long time, but it was the truth! You see, I knew the people. Mr. Graham wondered why White Plains always been counted so good and it wasn't [anymore]. Well, they had all those trailer parks moved it. This sounds a little bad, because not all the children in the trailer parks are not poor, but we've had a lot of that at Westfield over back of where your folks [Jacksons] live. They are coming from West Virginia because we pay more social [benefits]."

Mrs. McIntyre was instrumental in getting the first Title I (now Chapter I) Reading program in Surry County.

"I was at Flat Rockand the principal, Mr. Norman Smith told me that this was a poor area economically and that it was the ambition of the children to quit school. He asked me what we could do to get them interested in school. He said, 'You've got to help me, Mac.' I thought about it a little bit. You could get money from the government for most things. So in a day or two I got back to Mr. Smith and asked him why we couldn't ask for and get a room for some special reading in it for these children. He said, 'Now its your idea.' He was really good to get along with. So I called Raleigh and asked if they knew of anybody had a special reading program and they said that a place in Rockingham was doing a little bit. Norman and I were going over to see it. Sandra Martin, a teacher at Franklin now, was an aide at Flat Rock and she told her mother Tincey Hall who was an aide at Westfield. Tincey told Dr. Huffman. Later their pictures were in the paper that they started the first reading laboratory, but Ersie started it. So we went over there. They said that if we were getting a place at Flat Rock why not get a place at Westfield as well, so those were the first two places to get the reading labs. I wrote it up and we got all kinds of materials for those two places. It kept spreading. This was about 1971, but it boiled down from Norman Smith's asking what he could do for the children."

I thanked Mrs. McIntyre for this information. I was particularly interested in the people involved. Norman Smith began his first year as a principal at Westfield as I began my first year as a teacher in 1967. He stayed for two years, and was replaced by another first-year principal, Gilbert Huffman. Sandra Martin was a graduate of Westfield High School, as was her husband, George Martin who served as custodian at Westfield. Her mother Ronalda (Tincey) Hall, also had three other daughters who became teachers, including Glenda Riddle who currently teaches second grade at Westfield. Tincey's sister, was the late Mrs. Ethel Hall Christian, who taught at Westfield for many years, and whose husband, Will, subsequently married Roxie Hunter Payne.

We then discussed political influences on the schools. When Mrs. McIntyre was hired at Nancy Reynolds, a local committee did the hiring, but "teachers were so scarce they were glad to get almost anyone."

I asked Mrs. McIntyre about the strength of community control when she began teaching she replied, "the principal had ultimate control, in my opinion. In most cases, they listen to the local board. But I think that as long as they didn't get to far out of line, the local board and the principal had complete control at that time."

I interjected asking if the local boards had more control then than they do now. "Right, they're figureheads now. The principals tell them what he has done and the sort of O.K. it for the community, but it is already an accomplished fact."

Mrs. McIntyre felt that "for the present time and the trends education is taking, it is about the only thing you can do. It takes away a lot that feeling that everybody is working together. I think I had good rapport, but I worked on that. I knew how important that was. I could tell you every teacher's name and what they did. I made a point of knowing the teachers' aides the first time I went around the schools. For instance if there was a different aide assigned to you, I looked at my little record and I looked them in the eye so I could call them by name. It made a difference in how they felt. I don't suppose now they have time or they are out in the schools that much. Now Mr. Graham insisted that I get out in the schools. I did my paperwork early in the morning and late in the afternoon so I could spend my time in the schools. I tried to notice. I had a pretty good mind on this [supervision], because that is what I was interested in. When I came around the second time, I could tell you something that I liked particularly in your room the month before or three weeks before. I think that helped teachers to feel that someone appreciated their work. I

hope we haven't got so busy with figures that we have left the feelings out of it."

We then discussed the control or influence on the schools by the state and national school administrations. Mrs. McIntyre replied that when she began teaching these did not have as much control over the schools as they do now. "Schools were a little more isolated. Nancy Reynolds did not have a telephone when I began teaching there, so you were a little more on your own. There was not someone constantly coming. Once a month they would bring your paycheck. I was fortunate to teach under a very good principal who got the school accredited in a short while. But, it was mainly just work on his part, because we didn't see any county people or Raleigh people much. When I became a supervisor, the state and federal government were really pinning down. I remember getting home one afternoon, and I don't care if you record this, and Mr. Green [Superintendent of Stokes County Schools] called. We had a summer Head Start and someone had shown up there and he did not know what to tell them. So I went back to show him what we were doing. I realized that he was just a college student, so I showed him the records that we had, and I learned a lot. I learned to ask them questions. At lot of them were getting paid just to ask us questions. I hate to say this, but its true. He didn't know as much about the program as I did, and I had

worked hard to comply. So I just asked him what I needed to do about so and so, and they quit bothering me. They would call from Washington and say are you doing so and so, and I would say 'Yes sir, and I'm really glad to hear from you!' I kept my little list ready to start asking questions. It led to a very peaceful life when I learned to start asking questions, and I've never told that before."

I asked Mrs. McIntyre if she recognized these people as being bureaucrats instead of educators and she replied sharply, "I think that is fair enough! I think the thought behind it, to keep us straight, was good enough, but the people coming around didn't know as much about it as we did. Mr. Green was worried that we might have done something wrong, but I just settled their nerves in a hurry," replied Mrs. McIntyre laughing.

"We had some Raleigh people who were very, very good. I learned who the good ones were, I believe that you know me that well, and we would get those up to help us. We had some that helped us a lot. We had some that we dodged," she said with a hearty laugh, "if we could. Hatha Hayes, [a SDPI consultant] you helped on that reading thing [the first K-12 Curriculum Guide in reading], she was great. We correspond yet. She is at UNC-Wilmington. She said that was the best group she had ever worked with.

I commented that Mrs. McIntyre seemed to enjoy her first years at Nancy Reynolds and that she seemed to enjoy living near the schools where she worked. "I think its very important. I knew the families. If I had a child that could not read very well. I probably knew the family well enough to know why. Most of the time I made point of visiting my families, even though I almost always knew them, and you would know why a thing was happening. Two or three that I taught I knew that their daddy didn't give a dime about education and would keep them out to work. And if they were really trying I would work hard to catch them up because it wasn't their fault. I might not have been as considerate if I hadn't had known their daddy had kept them out to plow. If they wanted to stay after school I would work with them and take them home. I would do anything to see they succeeded. It is a distinct advantage in knowing the families.

"I remember one case of a little boy who had a little sister who was born without arms. Now you had better believe that I took pains with that little boy for awhile. It was a traumatic time in that family. When the teacher does not know the problems in a family there is a lot lost.

"I have had some experience with that since schools have been separated [reorganized]. For example, I have had relatives that have gone to North Stokes High School.

When Richard's [grand-nephew and next door neighbor] mother passed away after a twelve-year bought with lupus, he went back to school the next day to take a test. I insisted that Chassie [his grandmother] go with him and bring him home after the test. He doesn't realize this, but this is when we decided that he would go somewhere else the next year. He had this teacher who said, 'Sorry to hear about your daddy'.

Richard replied, 'What about my daddy?'

'Well, he died, didn't he?'

"The teacher didn't even know whether it was his mother or daddy who was buried the day before. He didn't know that we took exception with this, but you had better believe that we did! I took high exception to that! Mr. Lyons [North Stokes principal] told me later that he wish he had known when this was discussed, but we let Richard make his own decision.

"Mr. Hauser [teacher/coach at Westfield] had seen him play baseball somewhere and he kept checking. He said 'I've checked everywhere under the sun and I've come to find out that that Pell boy is related to you! I wanted him up here in school next year on my baseball team.'

"I told him that we planned for him to be at Westfield the next year, but he doesn't know it. But if you could change his mind . . . So we discussed it and Mr. Hauser went to see Richard. We got it on the foot. You

how contrary they are about changing schools [transferring from Stokes to Surry] and Mr. Lyons helped on that. I told them that I was mobile and I did not have anyone at home. I told them [Stokes County school officials] that if they would not agree to it, I would ask Preston Owens [a cousin who lived in Surry, just outside Westfield] to let us use Jesse's [his brother's unoccupied] house next to him. We would get two rooms and Richard and I will stay there. We're going to change him. He's not going to be exposed to that. Going all that distance, getting up at six o'clock."

Mrs. McIntyre felt so strongly about the change of schools for her nephew that she was willing to move her own residence. "To me it was a matter of education, riding one at 6 or 6:30 in the morning for an hour or an hour and a half over to the netherlands of Stokes County. Mr. Lyons was one of my favorite principals, he was one of my best friends. I think he had a good school. Anyway Mr. Lyons signed the release and it worked out perfectly. Somebody had to take him [to Westfield], not me, because I had to be in Dobson. But that was no problem, because there were plenty in the family to do that. Don't you think the distance would affect quality? If you call that education, then that is something that I don't. You spend three hours on the road if the weather is good, if it is bad, more. And why in the world would you expect a child

to behave riding that far? They're youngsters. I wouldn't have at that age, I'll be frank. I would have gotten into something. I would have picked on somebody."

Mrs. McIntyre felt this strongly about the situation even though the first twenty years of her career as a teacher and supervisor had been in Stokes County. "They're not thinking of the children now. They are thinking about the allotment that they get from the state. Anybody would have to say that, that you would ask a child to ride that far and make it inconvenient for them."

Mrs. McIntyre then explained how her nephew's problem was resolved. "He played that summer with Mr. Hauser, but he couldn't later on unless he changed schools. So Mr. Hauser talked to him and told him that he would like to have him on his team. My nephew was behind [academically] really, but Mr. Hauser is a good math teacher, he is one of the best math teachers in the county. Richard was really concerned after a month or two. He told me that he thought he was behind in math compared to the rest of the class. I asked him a month later how he was doing and he told me that he was doing all right. But he got really concerned because Mr. Hauser teaches algebra to his top students, and he thought he wouldn't make that group. He hated the idea of being behind. I told him that we all knew was that he was in Mr. Hauser's seventh grade class, and if he didn't make it

[algebra group] we would love him just as much, and not to worry about it. One afternoon, I saw him coming across the pasture and I thought he was going to break his neck! He wasn't walking, he was jumping. He made that algebra class. I've never seen a child as thrilled in my life! He did well throughout high school [East Surry]. I feel as though, and I can't prove this, that he did much better than he would have taking that long ride."

Richard's father, Tandy Pell, Mrs. McIntyre's nephew and neighbor, and I were in Miss Lena's first grade class at Westfield School. He is currently a rural mailman for Route 2, Westfield, NC. His brother, Rick, serves Route 1. Six years following his wife's death, Tandy remarried. Kay Pell was a widow in White Plains of Surry County. Her sister is married to Grant Christian, Westfield Postmaster. Kay had two sons who also had to experience the problems of living in Stokes County at Tandy's home, and attending school at Westfield.

"Kay told me before they married, that they would have to go back up there [White Plains] because the children would not agree [to attend Stokes County Schools] since they had been all their lives in Surry County Schools. When she married on June 1 and moved down here she was concerned that her children would be in different school districts. I told her let's wait until school was out and get Dr. Huffman [former Westfield principal and

Associate Superintendent of Surry County Schools] to assign them to Westfield, because he did that job then. I agreed that I would talk to him. I knew that if we just told the truth that Stokes County [officials] would just say that they are changing schools anyway, send them to North Stokes, Nancy Reynolds or Francisco. I talked to Dr. Huffman and he agreed that was the way to do it. Kay didn't trust me on that, and that sort of hurt my feelings," Mrs. McIntyre said with a smile. "She got Tandy to go see Dr. Huffman before they were married. Dr. Huffman told them that only by assigning them to Westfield and East Surry from White Plains could they hope to get a release from Stokes County. It looked as though they had been assigned to the East Surry District and she had just remarried and moved across the Stokes County line. A little "hanky-panky," but we got it! As it ended up they liked Westfield and they liked East Surry. Otherwise the choice would have been going ultimately to North Stokes ninety-ten miles away, learning all new friends. They had ties and knew people in each one of these places [Westfield and Pilot Mountain]. About three years ago one of the boys' [Will] releases did not come through. I was on a cane just barely walking, and his mother called, very concerned. I told her not to jump out the window, because she was all upset and crying wondering what her son would have to do. I reminded her that I knew all the Stokes

County people. I told her that I would go right that minute, as soon as I could change clothes, to Danbury. Each party blamed the other. The boy was told at East Surry that he could not continue because his release had not come. So I brought the release from Danbury by Kay's house for her to fill out and sign. I took it to Dobson for the Superintendent Glenn Cook to sign. I brought it back to Kay and said for her and Tandy to take it to Danbury when he got home from the mail route. We got the release in that one day. For some reason, he first application did not go through."

Mrs. McIntyre could give no reason why the release did not go through the first time. "Everybody at Danbury was nice, they were being just as nice as could be, but I had worked with them, remember. I don't know that if that made any difference, they couldn't have been nicer. Of course, Glenn was nice in Dobson. So there Will was about to go up the spout and Kay, too. I told her that we would do the same thing we had talked about before [with Tandy's son Richard]. I'll go stay with him during the week up at Preston's house. I can finagle when I have to!"

Mrs. McIntyre wanted to explain that there was no personal problem with the Stokes County officials. "I love the Stokes County people. I know all the teachers, the older ones, all the principals. I loved all of those people. I know the members of the Board of Education.

But it just an untenable situation the youngsters are in. And I might add this, it was nothing unusual for me to come home in the afternoon and find a note from someone in Winston-Salem or somewhere who wanted to buy a lot to build a home. But after the school situation became what it is, I couldn't give my farm away here. I couldn't sell a building lot to a family with children of school age, because they would have to ride to North Stokes. And I'm not saying a thing against the school, its the fact of being pulled all that distance. And don't tell me you can learn after you have ridden that far and somebody yelling 'Be Quiet'!"

I commented that in this week's Winston-Salem Journal the lead article was discussing the tax rates in Stokes County. Property values have skyrocketed in the southern half of the county around King, but not increased in the northern half of the county. I mentioned that while I was serving as the state chairman of the NCAE Political Action Committee for Education, I had discussed the Surry/Stokes problem with state representative Worth Gentry of King and tried to get him to use his influence to have the Stokes Board of Education to release students for the reason that if they refused to do so, no one would want to move families into the northwest section of the county. My prediction of 1972 has been proven correct.

Mrs. McIntyre also related some other families' experiences with the Surry/Stokes School situation. "I know of one family, particularly. She had two children and she married again. They lived down in Stokes. Her children went to North Stokes for one year. They brought a trailer out from Pilot Mountain and stayed in it for part of the time, enough to make it legal to attend school there.

I know another [Stokes] family that rented two rooms in Pilot Mountain and stayed there just enough to make it legal so that they didn't have to go through the process of getting the release from Stokes County. Another family moved to Pilot from South Stokes to go to school at East Surry."

I noted that in my research I was concentrating on the Surry/Stokes situation as it related to Westfield, but there were also families involved in the Pilot Mountain Elementary School district. "It wouldn't be so bad just going to Nancy Reynolds [Elementary], but when you finish there you have to go on [to North Stokes], because they have got good teachers down there. That would not be an unreasonable ride, unless you could see Westfield School from your house, and then it is unreasonable, because you have to go to North Stokes when you finish. Its terrible; enrollments are being used to try to hold the school, and they make it hard on the kids and hard on the parents. A

few years ago six or eight families got together and went to court and all but one got the release. Because it meant when the children came back home from school, there would be nobody at home.

"I might add this, and I don't care if you record it, the former superintendent, Mr. Gentry said that we had a good many students in the small school of Shoals who went to Pinnacle in Stokes County. When the Surry residents asked he always gave them permission to attend school in Stokes at Pinnacle. He said, 'If they ask for a release, no matter what the reason, I will give it. I am not going to be guilty. If they work at R.J. Reynolds, and can leave their children at Pinnacle and someone will look after them and keep them there - I'm not trying to make a big show [of power]. I am not here to make it harder on the children and the parents.'

We had a good many all this time [Shoals residents of Surry County attending Pinnacle School in Stokes County] and it about evened out [with Stokes students attending Westfield]. The Stokes people made it seem as though we were stealing, but if you count the ones of ours who went to Pinnacle, it was about the same. Of course, after the 1972 case, they had to have a release, but that was never a problem with Surry officials. I wonder since the school is being moved out of Westfield and closer to

Pilot Mountain if the Stokes officials are going to be more militant about it. We will have to wait and see."

We then talked about the loss of the school to the community at Westfield. This conversation took place on the day following the final school reunion on Sunday, May 30, 1993. "It has been my judgment that a church and a school mean a lot to a community. It will take away a lot from the community. That has been our school for a lot of years. Even though I went to Nancy Reynolds and taught down there, Westfield was still my school because I finished there. Over the years I have been to a lot of activities there. I doubt that I end up at many over at the other place. Of course, I am getting too old now, and I don't have ties. I remember coming the night that Lena [Smith] gave the program and your class with [my nephew] Tandy [Pell] and [Dr.] Joe [Jackson], and he barked when you sang "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" and your crawling out in your yellow pajamas with the feet and the flap in the back to "I Saw Mama Kissing Santa Claus." I can just see the way you all did that even though it was forty years ago. But hopefully, the people will learn to work with the new Westfield Elementary School over there. Hopefully everyone will learn to work together, but it will make a difference. I understand that the building is just a mansion, so maybe the conveniences and being in a super building will help. I think we all [former

educators] deserve some pats on the back, really, because we did a good job in spite of buildings and a lack of things. We often bought them out of our own pocket, or at least I did. We couldn't provide them with decent restrooms and what have you. But I suppose that [new facility] will make up for the loss. A lot of people can get involved. Over the years I have run into Liz, Dr. Jackson's wife. Wherever her children are [Westfield, East Surry] she gets involved. She has been very involved with East Surry. But she has had the time and the money to do it. So hopefully there is going to be a certain percentage of parents who will follow their children. It has been my judgment that a certain percentage will. Hopefully even more parents than we imagine. It is important for the parents and teachers to know one another, I feel."

I asked Mrs. McIntrye if she felt that the people from Westfield would grow to include the new Westfield School as a part of their extended community? "Don't you think the principal will make a big difference in this? How they perceive what we have and the way we do things? If I were a politician, and I know what you need to do, I would do a lot of things. If I were a school principal I would deliberately plan things to pull the parents in. It can be done. I always thought that Van [Dearmin, former Westfield student and principal at the new Pilot Mountain

Middle School] was a good guy, and after listening to him yesterday [at the Westfield Reunion], I rather perceive this. He was assuring them that we will love and look after your children. I would send a little note home, or have some activity, or call a parent occasionally. If you see a child doing something well, make a note of it and have the secretary send a note home. You can do a whole lot. A kind word goes a long way."

Along these same lines, I asked Mrs. McIntyre if she felt that the Westfield citizens understood the middle school concept. "I doubt if they do. But again, Mr. Dearmin can get that across all of the time. He seems to be the type to do that. He seems to be a good man and his wife is an excellent teacher. You could tell by what he said yesterday. His school is going to be what it should be, not where or what, but the children. He assured parents that he is going to look after their children and that goes a long way. I think they will get it more all the time if you can involve them. I think it will better all the time providing we keep the parents in mind and work on that. Parent Involvement is the key. Anything you are involved in you learn about and do."

I then asked her how she and Mrs. Lena Smith finished college together. "Lena had had one or two years of college. She went to Appalachian with Vera [Smith] the first year. Some of us were going year round and she and

I got to riding together. In other words, she would go with me. We hit some classes together or she would be in the next class after me. We roomed together a couple of summers. Did she mention that we both finished with honors? We did finish at the same time. We think that it is really funny to tell people that because of the discrepancy in our ages. She went back to teaching and though teachers were scarce she realized that soon all teachers would have to have a college degree. Vera went with her one summer just to stay with her and get her started back. She realized that in terms of transportation, she couldn't keep going to High Point. She went three or four summers to finish her degree in 1952.

"I have been to school most of my life. Hazel Barber and I went out to Earlham University, a Quaker school, in Ohio. Her family is Quaker, from Harmony in Iredell County. I went about three summers and took classes in reading at George Peabody in Knoxville, Tennessee. I stayed in a University of Tennessee dormitory. They brought in people from all over the eastern seaboard. Lena went with me for one summer. I learned a whole lot. I went to Western Carolina to study reading. I went to Appalachian State University for several sessions."

I almost failed to ask Mrs. McIntyre about teaching relatives in school, and I asked why Tandy had transferred to Nancy Reynolds after being in my class in first grade with Miss Lena.

"He went to Westfield the first year, frankly, because you could if you were five. He was smart enough that we felt he ought to be in school, and he did fine. The Westfield bus did come by here then. I think the next year they decided that since he could ride with me, it would be good to go to Nancy Reynolds. Tandy and I were really close. He just loved going anywhere with me. We have always been really close. He was in my room in the sixth grade. Possibly I had to be more particular, it was a good group that he was in. I had to have a gall bladder operation and was out when they took the achievement test in the spring. Mr. Barber had to administer it. I laughed and told him that I thought that was a good thing or he would have thought that I taught the test. Tandy went out the top on it. He was the best one in that class. You see, I had to smooth it. Mr. Barber noticed him from then on. He later taught him calculus as a class of one. I had to be particular, because the children loved him, but at the same time they were jealous. They would tell me that Tandy was into anything that went wrong. His mother came to pick him up to go to the dentist. This one little boy didn't see him leave as we went to lunch. I heard a

commotion in back of me in the boys' restroom. I went back there and stood. I brought those involved to my room. They told me that Tandy was involved. I asked them if Tandy was unrolling toilet paper. 'Oh, yes, ma'am!' They were really spreading it on. I told them that I had not really meant to punish anyone, but that I planned to do so now because Tandy had been gone for an hour. They were very apologetic, but it makes it difficult to have them [a close relative or child] in the class. My father wasn't a teacher, my mother was. But he taught me a lot about school. You know one thing he told me was 'Don't ever get angry and punish a child today for what he has done. Tell him that we will talk about it tomorrow. You do some Quaker praying about it and see what you need to do.' Well, that was really good advice, because he said what was important today, might not be important tomorrow. So when tomorrow came, the children had likely been punished enough just thinking about it, and my perspective was better. You know, that advice stood me in good stead, I shelved it until the next day, and maybe prayed over it, too. But that is a very good idea, to not rush into punishing. I think maybe I heard the same idea stressed by Dr. McNutt. Anybody who went to school under Dr. McNutt had a good influence."

"I really enjoyed my years as a teacher. I worked hard. I tried to have units. I think anybody who ever

came into my classroom would say that. Units were worked out and we did a lot of things with them. But I really enjoyed my years of teaching. And then I enjoyed my years as a supervisor, because I could work with the teachers, and see the children. I did miss being close to the children while I was a supervisor. I enjoyed being a supervisor, but I missed the children. I really enjoyed the children. I have worked as a tutor in reading with several since I retired. I would declare that I am not going to do this again, I cleaned up upstairs and I got rid of all my stuff. A few springs ago this lady came up with tears in her eyes, 'You will please help me?' What are you going to do? So I went to Pinnacle so it wouldn't be the very same material duplicated. I worked with this little boy all summer who was just about to fail. Two years later a teacher gave him an A+ in reading. I found out that the parents were trying to help, but they were really pressuring. I think he had been ignored. He was such a timid little boy. He has really come out of the kinks. I keep up with him."

Mrs. Ersie Pell McIntyre: Interview Interpretation. Mrs. Ersie McIntyre's experiences were more varied than those of any of the other teachers with whom I spoke. She attended school in Stokes County, graduated from Westfield High School, taught and was a supervisor in Stokes County, became the first woman in the system to obtain a master's

degree, and retired as the Elementary Supervisor of Surry County Schools.

Unlike Mrs. Christian or Aunt Vera, who do not feel that their place is Stokes County, Mrs. McIntyre, though she has lived all her life on her ancestral farm, sees herself as belonging to both counties, especially as an educator. She knows the history of the Westfield Community. However, her place has largely been limited to those two counties although she attended graduate school at UNC-Greensboro and she and her late husband maintained a home in Guilford County. Even though her place is larger than those of the other teachers with whom I spoke, Mrs. McIntyre's personal connections have resulted from the scale of her place as shown by her relationships in both Surry and Stokes Counties.

Gender issues did not deter her. "My family does not like for me to tell this, but back then it just wasn't a day that women went to school . . . They didn't really believe then in girls . . . we had a car for the family, but the boys drove it, the girls didn't, not until I bought one. I have paid every penny on every car I have ever owned." She spoke with pride of her struggles and various jobs to obtain funds to attend college, even in the face of her father's discouragement and withholding of financial support. As one metaphor, boundaries can been seen as walls to restrict, confine, or keep others out.

Throughout her life, whenever Mrs. McIntyre has recognized such obstacles, it has been her policy to use her own resources and initiative to knock down or go around the hurdle. The impetus to complete her master's degree was provided by a principal who doubted her initiative; "if someone told me that I couldn't do a thing, I always did it . . ."

Mrs. McIntyre is a very bright and talented lady and her story is one of self-reliance. Her early competitiveness with her older sister has been reflected throughout her personal and professional life as sheer determination has driven her to achievement. This seeking of inner resources and strength served her well as a supervisor where she often confronted those at the state and federal bureaucracies with her own agenda. Serving as a teacher and supervisor in both systems, she clearly recognized the Stokes/Surry disputes in political terms of allotment rather than ostensible educational criteria. "They are not thinking of the children now. They are thinking about the allotment they get from the state."

Like Mrs. Christian, Aunt Vera, and Mrs. Lowe, Mrs. McIntyre spoke of her personal connections. My first visit was preceded by an example of familiarity with authority when she made an offer of her pound cake. She spoke of the intergenerational continuity that she senses she has maintained, and particularly of values from her

Quaker background. She frequently mentioned by name those with whom she had had personal contact throughout her life. Beginning with her parents, and her sister, she commented on other members of her family including her Uncle Walter, and her nephew Tandy and his family. She has felt more closely connected with the more sturdier members of the church Erastus Vaughn, Hazel Barber, and Dr. Swanson Richards than with the residents of the trailer parks. This speaks to the notion of Westfield not being just a tightly knit community or a community that is closely connected except for the blacks. The social relationships are more complicated in terms of class distinction. Mrs. McIntyre is connected to influential people, particularly those in the field of education. Speaking of the Stokes County Schools administration and its school board during one Stokes/Surry incident, she said, "I reminded her that I knew all the Stokes County people." She discussed her professional relationships with Dr. McNutt at UNC-Greensboro; Mr. Green, Mr. Barber, Mr. Lyons, and Worth Gentry in Stokes; J. Sam Gentry, Charles Graham, and Dr. Gilbert Huffman in Surry. Her friendships include, in addition to those above, Mrs. Vera Smith and Mrs. Lena Smith. She noted that knowing the names of parents and teachers "affected how they felt" showed her concern for the affective domain and inter-personal relations. Demonstrating her compassion and

empathy she mentioned that "I knew the families", "I took pains with that little boy . . . It was a traumatic time in that family. When the teacher does not know the problems in a family, there is a lot lost" and "I might not have been as considerate if I hadn't known their Daddy had kept them out to plow." Her sense of personal connection is also revealed in the story of her grand-nephew, Richard, whose teacher rather callously addressed him following his Mother's death. Her indignation,"I took high exception to that!", also reflects her concern for personal relationships in the fact that the teacher had not come to know Richard.

Mrs. McIntyre has also used personal intervention quite frequently in her professional life. She knows the territory and has been skilled in working it. Childless herself, she was ever ready to intervene on the behalf of her nephew, his son and stepsons in their problems resulting from living in Stokes County and attending school in Surry County. Mrs. McIntyre's initiative and influence were remarkable for their speed in a later instance, considering that she accomplished in one day the action that generally requires a court case. She was efficient and successful in each of the situations. In dealing with superintendents, school boards, and state and federal officials, Mrs. McIntyre has relied upon personal contact to resolve conflict. She does not speak of the

educational issues involved; but rather the consultants are seen in personal terms, rather than being administrators or supervisors. Her comments also reflect her shrewdness in personal relationships. "We had some people in Raleigh who were very, very good. I learned who the good ones were . . . and we would get those up here to help us. We had some that helped us a lot. We had some that we dodged." Mrs. McIntyre also sees herself as being able to manipulate bureaucrats, especially those that seem to know little about curriculum issues. "I can finagle when I have to!"

Her church and school connections have largely overlapped. A member of the Westfield Friends Meeting, Mrs. McIntyre is proud of this heritage and sees the Quaker influences continuing not only in Westfield but also in other areas of Surry County. She counts her own self-esteem as a product of this heritage in which the community relied upon its own resources rather than seeking outside support. Therefore, she sees the church as important not only to her integrity, but to the traditions of the community as well.

Like the other teachers, Mrs. McIntyre spoke in the concrete more often than in the abstract when discussing her role as a supervisor. She noted being able to recall all the names of the elementary teachers and teacher assistants in both the Stokes and Surry School Systems as

well as taking notes so she could make personal comments to each individual and maintain her connections. She had been aggressive not only in the politics of the school systems, but in initiating school programs, such as the first Title I Reading program in Surry County.

With reference to the political influences on the schools, Mrs. McIntyre believed that the local school had more control over its own affairs when she began teaching. When she was hired at Nancy Reynolds, a local committee hired the teachers. "The principal had ultimate control . . ." She noted the increase in the influence of the state and national professionals since then. "Schools were a little more isolated [until the 1960s or so]. Nancy Reynolds did not have a telephone when I began teaching there, so you were a little more on your own. There was not someone constantly coming." She noted, however, that after she became a supervisor, the professional bureaucrats were beginning become more specific and controlling by more closely monitoring the local schools. "When I became a supervisor, the state and federal government were really pinning down."

Mrs. McIntyre does not perceive the school as being as an integral part of the community as Mrs. Christian does. Mrs. McIntyre sees the school as a separate entity into which the parents should be drawn. She strongly feels that parent involvement is the key to

better schools. "It has been my judgment that a certain percentage will follow their children [to the new Westfield School]. Hopefully even more parents than we imagine. It is important for the parents and teachers to know one another, I feel."

Her comments more closely parallel those of Van Dearmin, the principal of the new Pilot Mountain Middle School. In fact she agrees with many of his proposals and gives her own additional suggestions. As we spoke of the possible inclusion of the new school into the perceived domain of a "greater" Westfield, Mrs. McIntyre spoke of the importance of the role of the principal in helping to bring together the various communities being served by the Pilot Mountain Middle School. "If I were a school principal I would deliberately plan things to pull the parents in. It can be done. I always thought than Van was a good guy, and after listening to him yesterday, I rather perceive this. He was assuring them that we will love and look after your children. I would send a little note home, or have some activity, or call a parent occasionally. If you see a child doing something well, make a note of it and have the secretary send a note home. You can do a whole lot. A kind word goes a long way."

However, she does seem to make a significant distinction between the school as community versus the community school. She pointed out that neither the

location of the school nor even the school itself is of as great importance as the children themselves. "His school is going to be what it should be, not where or what, but the children [are the primary concern]. He assured parents that he is going to look after their children and that goes a long way." Mrs. McIntyre continued to comment on the importance of community awareness. "I think it will get better all the time providing we keep the parents in mind and work on that. Parent involvement is the key. Anything you are involved in you learn about and do."

Mrs. McIntyre recognized years ago the effects that new members of a community could have upon older established communities and their schools, especially those schools that have traditionally had strong community support. Her comments on the influx of new people to the Westfield and White Plains communities, point to her insight into class distinctions and the need for accommodation and change.

The concept of loss as a result of the school reorganization was predicated upon her earlier remarks about parent involvement and the role of the principal, as she offered suggestions for making the new school and the communities come together. It is significant that she sees the new Westfield School as separate from the communities it serves. "It will take away a lot from the community. That has been <u>our</u> school for a lot of years .

. . Even though I went to Nancy Reynolds and taught down there, Westfield was still my school because I finished there . . . I suppose that [new plant] will make up for the loss . . . . But hopefully, the people will learn to work with the new Westfield Elementary School over there. Hopefully everyone will learn to work together, but it will make a difference."

Mrs. Lena Matthews Smith Interview: June 3, 1993

Following the Westfield High School Reunion on May 30, 1993, my cousin, Dr. Joe Jackson and I, former classmates in first grade with "Miss Lena" took some cake and a commemorative napkin to her. Her home adjoins the school parking lot. We had a delightful conversation and I visited her the next Thursday. She was willing to hold the microphone as we began our discussion of her early life.

"I was an only child. Up until the time I started school I had always wanted to be a nurse. My mother was a nurse at Southwest Virginia State Hospital in Marion. She was from Abington, Virginia. An orphan, she was raised by an aunt. Both her parents died when she was small. They had a wagon manufacturing company in Abington. My father was from Carroll County, Virginia, near Hillsville. He was one of thirteen children. He came to the hospital and bought his first suit of clothes."

While Miss Lena was growing up, her mother worked part-time as a nurse and also kept a boarding house. Her father was an attendant who took the same nursing course that his wife had taken at the state hospital. "His talents were towards building, carving, things like that," she said, pointing to a large white frame dollhouse.

"My first week in school in the first grade, I decided I wanted to be a teacher, that I didn't want to be a nurse. I went through the grades at Marion and for a long time, I was in the top ten of the class. To go to [post-secondary] school, my Daddy said I could either go Marion College for two years or go to the state school at Radford. So, I made the decision to go to Radford." She attended Radford for one year to get a teaching certificate in 1926-27. She showed me her meticulous scrapbook from that experience. "I taught in Wythe County, but I was paid by Smyth County. There were two schools on the border line, like Westfield. I taught for two years in the first three grades in a little two-room school about fifteen miles from home. My daddy bought a car for me so I wouldn't have to stay away from home. I didn't like driving. I never did.

I met Jack Smith in Galax, Virginia. He was with Mr. Shelton from Westfield who was visiting his daughter, whom I was also visiting. I corresponded with Jack for two years while he was in Florida. He had attended

Horner's Military Academy in Charlotte and had gone to Carolina [UNC-CH]. He was first a salesman with Reynolds Tobacco, then with Brown and Williamson. He spent two years in California before we were married. [After we were married,] we lived in Florence and Columbia, South Carolina.

I didn't begin teaching [in public schools] in South Carolina because they weren't employing married women at that time. Of course, my education was very small then, too. I met this lady who had a private studio who employed me to help with the girls who came to her to train in dictation for the Federal Reserve Bank in Columbia. I took a business course, but I didn't like it. I did enjoy the people I was meeting. I taught six years, I believe. While Jack was traveling for Brown and Williamson, I was helping Mrs. Campbell in this private studio. We moved to Westfield in 1947. Jack thought it would be easier to make a living here, and get out of the heat of South Carolina.

At that time Mrs. Smith was thirty-seven years old and her husband was forty-three, and both had established careers. Why did they return to Westfield? "He came back to get rich up here at the tobacco warehouses. I was a clerk in the post office for four years, starting as a substitute, while Mr. C.D. Ball was postmaster. His wife was a first grade teacher at Westfield. I started

substituting also at Westfield School. The principals at that time were Mr. Minor, Mr. McCann for one year, Mr. Luther Byrd, and then Mr. Sowell under whom I did my practice teaching. They were short of teachers and the first thing you know I was over there substituting more than anything else. I substituted on up to the sixth grade, but I didn't enjoy the sixth grade. I substituted for Mr. Ball for several weeks when he became postmaster until his position at Westfield was filled. It was hard for some people to realize that you had to take an examination for the job, the Civil Service Examination. I don't think that Mr. Marshall, who the postmaster at the post office which used to be in the old building across the road that just burned a few weeks ago. When Dr. Tom and Miss Betty were first married, they lived there until her father, Mr. Bob George could build them this house, as he did for all of his children. The Needhams later had a post office in the building. Dick Marshall came here from White Plains and married one of the Lowe girls. They got the post office moved to their store at the intersection. Mr. Marshall and Annie Roonie Marshall wanted it. But politics entered in. People wanted a Democrat. Mr. Marshall was a Democrat, but his daughter, Annie Roonie, was a Republican. People around here didn't know much about Republican people," said Mrs. Lena with a laugh. "There weren't but about five Democrats here when I came

to Westfield. Mr. Tilley up here, Dr. Smith's brother-in-law was one, Mr. Rufe Simmons, another brother-in-law was one. That is about the time my ears began to listen a little more. Mr. Ball moved Dr. Tom's office from next door to across the road." The present post office stands on the same site, while the old post/doctor's office now serves at the voting place from the Stokes County residents of Westfield, or Frans Precinct in Big Creek Township.

I asked who offered her the job as a teacher. "The principal understood that I had some training. I had [college] credits so that my certificate was a very low standard. Your Aunt Vera carried me up to Appalachian. I was just about ready to go back to Marion, Virginia when one Sunday afternoon Vera said, 'You like the substitute work, why don't you teach?' I didn't like those upper grades.

"I enjoyed substituting, but the work was irregular, just a day here and there. Vera was the one who talked me into it [returning to college]. My Daddy and Mother helped me a little with money."

I then inquired as to exactly how Aunt Vera helped her. "She went and stayed the first six weeks with me that I had at Appalachian."

Miss Lena and Mrs. Ersie McIntyre have been friends for many years also and I inquired as to the beginning of their friendship.

"I met Mrs. Ersie Pell McIntrye one day in Pilot Mountain. Her remarks were very short, but Jack and her father, Mr. Pell, were good friends. They went to chicken-fights together. Mr. Pell was one of the nicest gentlemen I had ever met and I was so surprised, I thought it was terrible that Jack went to one. When he told me that Mr. Pell had been, I thought it was all right to go to chicken fights, then. I just didn't know anything about it. Dr. Henshaw from High Point College began to hold some classes for teachers to extend their education. Ersie, Annie Jessup, Ethel Christian and I went to classes down there. We went in the summers. Ersie, Annie and I all graduated at the same time."

Her diploma which hanging in the hall, and dated August, 1953. I mentioned that Mrs. McIntrye had told me that they both graduated with honors. "We did."

I mentioned that she had already had a good year in 1952-53 because she not only had me in her first grade class, but also her classroom was moved into the new primary building, where she finished her career. "I liked to joke with Dr. Huffman, that I spent thirty years in the first grade and he sent me home."

"To me it was advantageous to live and teach in the same community. I did drive from Marion to teach in Wythe County when I first began teaching in Virginia. I didn't like driving. I have stood up here [her home] and said a million times,'Wouldn't it be wonderful to be that close to your work?', she said pointing across the parking lot toward Westfield School. "Dr. Huffman [former first-year principal] said when he was out here [Westfield School] he never beat me to the school. I loved the people. I was interested in the children, their interests, their homes. I was a dancing Methodist," said Miss Lena with a laugh, "until I joined the Baptist Church [also adjacent to her home]. I have loved Westfield."

I commented that it was interesting that she, Mr. and Mrs. Ball, Mrs. Gladys Jessup and Aunt Vera were all from Virginia. Said Miss Lena with a laugh, "Well, they just knew good subjects! But I have peeped out that window and thought that it would be wonderful to teach at Westfield. Then I got my [college] education here."

Miss Lena said that no politics were involved with her hiring. She thought that the community used to have more influence in the schools. "Miss Betty used to say that she never a saw a school out here that did not have a Payne in it, like the Smiths have been for the past several years. Jeff Payne's family always seemed to be out here. Mrs. Loline Payne Hutchens [my third grade

teacher] I guess was the last one. I wasn't hired by the county school board, but by the local committee."

I noted that some people in the community wanted the new Westfield School to be built on the present site. I asked if she felt that way. "They feel that somebody let them down." She personally does not feel that way, "Not to know as much about the educational field. Pilot was just a little stronger than Westfield. There were not enough interested people in Westfield. That's the way I feel."

I asked if she felt that if the people in Westfield had been more united and showed more support for the school, it could have been kept on the present site. "Somebody over in the Cook settlement [Cook's School Community/South Westfield Township] had more [influence]. They are the ones that got the school moved. There was always a school over there, a small one. The old three-room school building was used to build someone's home. A Miss Johnson was a teacher there and they brought her over here [Westfield], after I came here in 1947. There was something between this area [North Westfield Township] and where they are putting it [South Westfield Township].

"There is a new group of people in here. I don't know them that well, I've not been active. They just found out what a good place Westfield was. There are

several people, I understand, who have moved in over at Bailey's Trailer Park, because it is the only place they could find to live, but I don't know any of them."

I commented as we sat on the sun porch that I could look to the north and see Westfield School adjoining the front lawn, and look to the east and see Westfield Baptist Church beside the back yard. This house must be considered the center of Westfield. Since the Stokes County line runs between the church and the parsonage. I asked her to comment on the Surry/Stokes situation.

"I didn't understand that myself when I came here. They could be in walking distance of the school and not be able to come because they lived in Stokes County. Dr. Tom and Miss Betty were both from Stokes County. His father's home, Captain John L. Smith's place, is just across the Stokes County line. I just didn't understand it. Of course the Reynolds people down there [Nancy Reynolds] had the money. I didn't grow up in a place like this that was so politically minded."

I asked then if she felt the situation was unfair to the students who live across the line in Stokes County. "I sure do! Of course you could turn around and say that the Reynolds could do for the children what no one else could do. I still think something is wrong with the children going to North Stokes High School. I just don't believe in so much transporting. But I grew up in a small

town, and we didn't have this problem. We put our foot in the road and walked. I had a mile to walk every day that I went to school," she said with a laugh.

As for the effect on the community of the moving of the school, Miss Lena first mentioned the Stokes County school of Nancy Reynolds. "They are still loyal to their school down there. I don't know enough to say, but I think that [the move] is something that is for the state instead of the community."

"I don't know how it will be. As new teachers are employed, I don't know if they will come out to this community. We are so close to the Stokes line, and Stokes has the advantage with Reynolds [money]." She really had no opinion on the effect on the community once the school was gone. However, after the children are gone, "I am going to miss them. I spent too many good years out there [Westfield School]. The people here in Westfield are lovely people, not just the Smiths.

I commented that she had parents who seemed to be very supportive of her education, even helping with her college work after she had married. "Neither one of them had an education. What they got, they got themselves. My Daddy said he never got out of the sixth grade.

I asked her how her mother-in-law, Mrs. Betty George Smith, in whose house Jack and Lena lived, felt about her teaching. "Honey,she didn't want me to! Miss

Betty was the mistress of her house! She discouraged me. Miss Betty wished me out of the house. She once told me, 'No two families should live in the same house.' I said, 'I know that Miss Betty, but I came because you asked me to stay.' She told me one day as she was dressing me down, that no house was large enough for two families. From that day, I never felt the same.

Mrs. Lena Matthews Smith: Interview Interpretation. Miss Lena indicated her awareness of political boundaries as she related the story about the reestablishment of the post office and noted the political considerations that entered into the picture. She referred to her growing awareness of political activity as, "the time my ears began to listen a little more." Miss Lena said that no politics was involved with her hiring and that she thought the community used to have more influence in the schools. "I wasn't hired by the county school board, but by the local committee." She was aware of political influences in the community through her father-in-law, Dr. Tom Smith, who had served as chairman of the local school committee, but had died eight years before she came to live in Westfield. Although she does not present herself as someone with a great deal of personal control, her ability to pursue a college degree and a teaching career in the presence of a domineering mother-in-law and an alcoholic husband, reveals Miss Lena's inner strength and

perseverance which she sees as an inheritance from her parents. "Neither one of them had an education. What they got, they got themselves."

In discussing personal and community traditions, Miss Lena spoke about the intergenerational influences of not only her parents,but also her husband's family, and noted that for many years members of the same families seemed to find positions at Westfield School. Her mother-in-law, "Miss Betty used to say that she never a saw a school out here that did not have a Payne in it, like the Smith's have been for the past several years . . . Mrs. Loline Payne Hutchens [my third grade teacher] I guess was the last one."

She further recognized the political boundary of the county line that crosses the community. "I didn't understand that myself when I came here. They could be in walking distance of the school and not be able to come because they lived in Stokes County . . . I didn't grow up in a place like this that was so politically minded." Like the other teachers saw the issue in terms of physical distance to be traveled rather than in terms of a difference in the quality of education between the two systems. "I still think something is wrong with the children going to North Stokes High School. I just don't believe in so much transporting. But I grew up in a small

town, and we didn't have this problem. We put our foot in the road and walked."

Throughout our conversations, Miss Lena spoke of the importance of personal relationships. She stated that her mother entered nurses training because "the family doctor evidently saw some good in her." Being an only child from Virginia, and childless herself, she has come to rely upon a few very close friends, including some members of her husband's family. Her decision to return to college and get her degree was largely influenced by Mrs. Vera Smith, who was also from Virginia. Their husbands, Uncle Bryan and Jack Smith were first cousins. "Your Aunt Vera carried me up to Appalachian. I was just about ready to go back to Marion, Virginia when one Sunday afternoon Vera said, 'You like the substitute work, why don't you teach?' Vera was the one who talked me into it. She went and stayed the first six weeks with me that I had at Appalachian." Another close friend who encouraged her and with whom she obtained her college degree is Mrs. Ersie Pell McIntyre. The importance of personal connections is reflected in her naming those who helped and attended sessions with her. When speaking of her time at High Point College, she named these friends rather than discussing the classes they took. "Ersie, Annie Jessup, Ethel Christian and I went to classes down there. We went in the summers. Ersie, Annie and I all graduated at the

same time." Other close friends have included Olin George, who was married to Miss Lena's sister-in-law, Lavinia, until her suicide in 1959. His second wife, Betty George, is also an only child from Winston-Salem, and has "adopted" Miss Lena as her second mother. They continue to help with yard and housework and to transport her to the hairdresser, grocery shopping, the bank, and other places as needed.

Her place seems to be Westfield although her space is limited by the fact that she has not driven an automobile since her earliest days of teaching in Virginia. Referring to new residents she noted, "They just found out what a good place Westfield was." The school building itself represented to Miss Lena a means of independence and self-achievement. Perhaps her school days were more pleasant that her home-life. After moving into the home and prior to beginning substituting at Westfield School, she "peeped out that window and thought that it would be wonderful to teach at Westfield."

Miss Lena also spoke of personal connections in the many references she made to her love of the children and the community. "I loved the people . . . I was interested in the children, their interests, their homes . . . I have loved Westfield . . . The people of Westfield are lovely people." However, her comments reflect that there is somewhat more distance between Miss Lena from Westfield

than with the other teachers. Perhaps because she did not come to Westfield until middle age, she identifies herself with the community less strongly than the other teachers.

She does feel that the Westfield Community did not organize itself to support the retention of its school. "Not to know as much about the educational field, Pilot was just a little stronger than Westfield. There were not enough interested people in Westfield. That's the way I feel." She implied that, in comparison to Nancy Reynolds School in Stokes County, the Westfield community did not remain loyal to its school. "They are still loyal to their school down there. The people of Westfield feel that somebody let them down." Miss Lena spoke to the concept of "other" in addressing the moving of the school. Without any specifics she believes that "somebody over in the Cook settlement [Cook's School Community/South Westfield Township] had more [influence]. They are the ones that got the school moved. There was always a school over there, a small one . . . There was something between this area [North Westfield Township] and where they are putting it [South Westfield Township].

Concerning the reorganization plan which would take the school out of the community, she said "I don't know enough to say, but I think that is something that is for [the benefit of] the state instead of the community." This comment revealed her recognition of the boundary

between the state and the community, her own affirmation of the local community, and her notion of "others".

"Others", is her term for newcomers to the community, in whom she recognizes a class distinction as well as her lack of a personal relationship with them. As new people are moving into the community, they have changed the character of Westfield. There is a difference between the new and the old, and perhaps the community is changing and its collective identity can not be maintained. Perhaps Miss Lena is implicitly speaking of a desire for continuity for these new residents have been largely transients from West Virginia seeking employment. "There is a new group of people in here. I don't know them that well, I've not been active. There are several people, I understand, who have moved in over at Bailey's Trailer Park, because it is the only place they could find to live, but I don't know any of them."

Miss Lena spoke of the advantages of living and teaching in the same community, which is not surprising considering the fact that the school parking lot joins her front lawn. "To me it was advantageous to live and teach in the same community . . . I didn't like driving. I have stood up here [her home] and said a million times, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to be that close to your work?'", she said pointing across the parking lot toward Westfield School.

Although she is a member of the First Baptist Church of Westfield whose grounds join her backyard, she has not maintained as close connections to Westfield Baptist as have Mrs. Christian, Aunt Vera, and Mrs. Jessup, or Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Lowe to their respective churches. She noted some distinction in her church memberships, which might represent a boundary within the boundary of the Protestant church. "I was a dancing Methodist", said Miss Lena with a laugh, "until I joined the Baptist Church!"

Miss Lena made a final distinction between personal and professional concerns as she commented on the investment of her life's work in the school, only to see it closed. "I spent too many good years out there." She believes that the Stokes/Surry boundary issue will continue to be problematic even in the future now that the school has moved and is uncertain of its effects on the community. "I don't know how it will be. As new teachers are employed, I don't know if they will come out to this community. We are so close to the Stokes line, and Stokes has the advantage with Reynolds [money]." She had no opinion on the effect on the community once the school was gone. She seems to accept the fact the school is leaving and that the community is changing. She neither seems particularly worried about these changes, nor does she show concern for the future. However, again addressing

the personal relationships, she says that she is sure that after the children are gone, "I am going to miss them."

Mrs. Bernice Cox Lowe Interview:

June 29, 1993

Our conversation began with Mrs. Lowe's early life.

"I started right above the school [Ridge-Westfield] there. I don't know if you know the farm that Delmar Joyce owns, but that was our homeplace. During the depression, they said that my Daddy lost it. But, nobody had a deed to the land, until it was sold for taxes. It was advertised for auction and Delmar bought it for the taxes owed. Nobody came to the auction and that is how he got a deed.

"Ten of us were born in the house. It was a little two-room house with two rooms upstairs, one for the boys and one for the girls. Mamma and Daddy slept downstairs, and we had the kitchen. We grew just about everything. We grew apples, peaches, cherries, and walnuts. We had bushels and bushels of wheat. When he would sell his tobacco in the fall, he would buy flour by the hundred-pound. He would buy hundred-pound sacks of rice, I remember that. He would buy a hundred pounds of sugar. He would buy cases of salmon. We did not know what it was to be hungry. Mamma canned everything that could be thought of. He grew huge watermelon patches. We had our

own cows, hogs, and chickens. We all ate at the table together. There was no such thing as television. We didn't even have a radio when I was growing up. We got one when I was in about the seventh grade. We got the first television after I had finished college." Her parents built the house in which Mrs. Lowe now lives with her husband Tom and an older sister, in 1943. The lot was purchased from Rufus East, who needed some money, by her brother, Thomas Woodrow Cox, (nicknamed "Gorrell" after a tobacco warehouseman) and sister Julia. "The title was in Julia's name, but all of us contributed.

"My Daddy and Mother believed in education. They were not educated people. Mama taught herself to read. She said that all she ever got out of school was a blue-back speller. That was the only book she ever had. But she was a very, very good reader, but could not write her name. She read novels, but she mostly read the Bible. She loved to recite the poem, "The House by the Side of the Road", which was what she always wanted so that she could help someone. She got her wish before she died. She could recite any number of poems, she just had a love of poetry."

Mrs. Lowe, the youngest of the Cox children, began school in 1929. "I attended Chestnut Ridge School. When they combined the Westfield Colored School and the Chestnut Ridge School, they called it the Ridge Westfield

School. Chestnut Ridge was located right where Ridge Westfield is now. I expect I walked eight miles a day to school. We had an adjoining farm, but the people who owned the land between the farms would not allow us to cross their land, so we had to walk around their farm. We didn't miss. We went those ninety days or whatever it was, for the six month school term. I think we had good teachers.

"I don't remember that much about the first grades, but what really impressed me was when I got up to about the sixth grade. I wasn't a good reader. But the teacher kept me in one day and said, 'You can read this.' He gave me a passage in a geography book. He said, 'You read this without missing any words and read with expression, or you aren't going to get any recess.' He did the whole class like that. I was the first in the class that completed that. He was teaching the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades; three classes in one room. I thought he was doing a fantastic job. There was never any such thing as getting up and doing what you pleased, and talking or disturbing other classes. You had to sit there and work while he was working with the other kids. It was pretty enjoyable. For the extra curricula activities we had baseball, basketball, and a glee club. Our glee club went all over the county singing. I wasn't allowed to sing, I had asthma, and they didn't like my voice. But the glee

club went to the white schools, the white churches, and all around. They were an outstanding group. They even performed at the country club in Mount Airy.

"I stayed at the Ridges until I finished the eighth grade. I attended Atkins High School [in Winston-Salem, NC], because there was not a school for us in the county then. They had a school, but it was in a house in Mount Airy, but my sisters and Mamma didn't want me to go there. They thought that I wouldn't get what they wanted me to have. We had no transportation, anyway. There were no buses. The best thing they could do for me was to put me where I could walk to school. I went to Atkins and stayed with my sister, Zelma. She lived about fifteen minutes from the school. She did not have many conveniences. She had three kids and three rooms. She lived in a long straight apartment with a toilet on the back porch. She was a strict lady, I had to study. My sister was a strict disciplinarian. If I went somewhere, I had to be back on time. Zelma was raising her children by herself. The way my parents paid her was by carrying her hams, chickens, and most of her food. They helped pay her house rent which was fifteen or twenty dollars a month, which was still a lot of money back then. When I went to Atkins High, there were poor records from my school. I don't remember carrying any records from my school. I just registered and they placed me. They probably had about

ten freshmen classes and they put me next to the bottom to see what I could do. I stayed in there for two weeks and they moved me to the second highest group. They didn't put me in the top group, because they didn't think that I could take Latin. Latin was taught in the top eighth grade class. I made it from there, every year I made it. I made the honor roll some years, and some years I didn't. I stayed there for four years of high school, and I graduated in the top ten of my class. I would come home in the summer and go back in September. In the summertime I helped Daddy to plow. I would hold the plow while he guided the mule."

She also helped a brother who was a tenant farmer on Toms Creek Road, who gave her a small patch of tobacco which provided her with funds. Mrs. Lowe explained that when, due to age, her father was unable to "house" the tobacco, by placing the sticks of green tied tobacco on tier poles in the barn, she would do all of the housing for him. This very strenuous work was normally done only by men.

"When I finished, my parents decided that I was smart enough to go college. They didn't have any money", added Mrs. Lowe quickly with a laugh. I then asked her more about the educational system for blacks in Surry County at that time. She explained that the school in Mount Airy was the only high school for blacks in the

county. There was no bus transportation until she was a junior in high school, about 1939.

There was a small private Baptist boarding school in Winston-Salem where "two of my brothers and three or four of my sisters attended. They got a preacher out of Winston named Pitts, Robert McCarther, and Julia Cox [older sister] went to Raleigh to petition for a bus. They got one bus, but that high school produced some pretty smart people." These included an older sister who attended after Mrs. Lowe started at Atkins High. She lived with a lady in Mount Airy. Mrs. Lowe explained that her parents felt "she was old enough to take care of herself, and not to get into any trouble." Her sister, Julia, "left home in the early '20s and lived in Winston-Salem with Zelma. She and Zelma went to Winston and worked for some Jews. Zelma was working so that Julia could go to school. She kept those kids, and that is how Julia got through high school and college. She went to the president of Winston-Salem State Teachers' College and told him that she did not have any money, but she wanted to go to school. Our people always believed in a lot of prayer. He told her, 'You just go to school. If anyone says anything, you just send them to me. You just take this slip and if you ever get anything you can give us something. That is how she got though school, without any

money, just what my sister could work in service and give her a little. That was all that they had."

Mrs. Lowe explained that her sister, Julia Cox Flowers, graduated and became a teacher at Ridge-Westfield for forty-five years. "Back then you could teach if you had finished seventh grade. She taught before she even went to high school. All these people around here who were of the same age always said, 'You were my teacher.'

"I don't know where they got the money to pay for my tuition, I really don't. It wasn't that high then. The first year I was there, I didn't work, but then the second year I got a job in the cafeteria, and that helped to pay my way. Later I worked in the dormitory. Then the girls couldn't go out at night. The matron told them at bedtime that they had to go to bed. I worked in the dormitory at the desk to check to see if the girls were in or out of the dorm. They gave me credit for that, and that is really how I got through school."

Mrs. Lowe noted that her clothes were "just whatever there was. I was grateful. None of the kids who were better dressed made any fun of me. I had the best of friends. The best of students were my friends. I don't know how that happened, but it happened. I was a little "raggedy" girl going to school. They were always trying to save at home. I remember homecoming when the freshman class was supposed to be dressed in red and white. Then

the girls wore white socks, and they had got me some black and white saddle oxfords. They made me a skirt, and bought me a white button-up sweater in Mount Airy. The skirt did not fit correctly," she said laughing, "but no one made fun of me, I remember that so well. All the other kids had things that were ready-made. But I was right in there! Nobody would believe it, but I played basketball in high school and college. I was supposed to be a pretty good basketball player," said Mrs. Lowe with a chuckle. "It was a lot of fun. After I played basketball, I got to be a cheerleader. I was just blessed to be in the better things at school. I realize it more and more now. As for recreation, there was not much. There was a lot of discipline. I came out in four years, graduating in 1945. I think I did well.

"When I came out of school, there was a lot of jealousy, because I was the first person in the black community who was sent out of the community and graduated from college. Julia had finished college first in the summers. Mr. Jones family in Mount Airy were the first in the county.

"There were two teachers at Chestnut Ridge. My sister Julia was one of the teachers. She went to the black committeemen and told them that she had a sister who had graduated from college and that 'we need her at home and here in the community.' Some of the committeemen were

for hiring me and some were against it. I got the job. When the Surry County Board of Education heard about me, they wanted to give me a job, to see what a home girl could do. I taught the first year and worked under Julia. They gave me the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, fresh out of college. We did well that year.

I also inquired of the Westfield Colored School on Toms Creek Road. "It was just a two-room school. We had a school put up by Julius Rosenwald, with the parents contributing. We had four big classrooms. One of the classrooms could be opened up with folding doors to make an auditorium. They gave some fantastic plays in there. "When I came there was just the two of us. We worked to get the attendance up, so that the next year we got another teacher. We had to get the average daily membership up. Let me tell you about the lunchroom. The kids didn't have anything for lunch. Julia started the lunchroom. In the back of the Rosenwald school was a large hall. They turned that into a kitchen and put a stove in there. They bought little round tin pans, and at first they only had beans for lunch, and something like potatoes. After I came we started getting commodities. We got an icebox, we didn't have a refrigerator. We hired a cook. Then it seemed that the school just started growing. Then the third year [1948] they decided to combine the schools. There was not a bus when I began. A

man was hired to haul the students that lived a long way from the school in a car. Later, the enrollment dropped and we were cut to two teachers, Julia and I. There was talk of moving everyone to Mount Airy. People really wanted it moved to Mount Airy, because that was going to make Jones School bigger. We wanted to keep our school so badly.

"Mr. Tharrington, the Surry County Schools Superintendent came out one day in 1950, and said, 'We're trying to decide if we are going to build a school here or put it in Mount Airy for the black people.' Then they had some people come up from Raleigh. We had no idea that anybody was coming. But I was in one room with a group of children and going back and forth to another room because there were so many children in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Julia was doing the same thing with the first, second, and third graders. Those eighth-grade kids were so smart. They were just great helpers. When they would learn something, they were out trying to teach the others. When those people walked in from Raleigh, the kids were so good. There was a group sitting here working, and a group over here working, and then this group in another room working. When they walked in, they were surprised. I was just walking back and forth from room to room. I heard a man say 'I've never come across anything like this, anywhere we have been. If we build a

school, this is where it ought to be. And that is how we got the new building in 1956 that is up there now. They came in and caught us as we were just moving back and forth, working with the kids. Everybody was working. If a child needed some help and another could help him, they would do it. The kids became teachers.

"Katie Hatcher, [currently a Chapter I teacher at Shoals Elementary School] was a local girl who had gone to Jones in Mount Airy and Winston-Salem State. She was a cousin, and then my sister became her step-mother. We got her in. After that we got another teacher from Winston-Salem. But she did not prove to do very well. She didn't help out in the community. All she did was to come on Monday, stay until Friday and then leave the community to go back to Winston-Salem.

"I think it is very important for a teacher to live within her community, because teaching school does not stop at the end of the day, that is a continuous process. If you are going to be a good citizen, you have got to have an interest in the community where they are living. They have got to be interested in you. We found that by working with our kids through Sunday, there was some respect they had, that the kids don't have now. They had respect for you. If they did something at church on Sunday, we were able to discipline them when they came to school on Monday. We would tell them that that was wrong.

I won't call myself bragging, but we were building some good citizens. Out of that group we were teaching, nobody had any involvement with the law. You did not hear of them getting into a lot of trouble, because there was a kind of respect.

"Right around 1956, the kids started bringing knives to school. One day I decided I was going to examine them. I said, 'Everybody has got to turn their pockets inside out. There is nobody in here that is bad, because bad people don't go to this school. There are none here but good people. I am the worst thing here, and you know that I am good. Now all of you turn out your pockets.' I just found some of them the other night, ten or twelve knives, that the kids had in their pockets. Nobody resisted giving them to me, everybody gave those knives up. I don't know if you could do that now, from what I can hear. But they were good about turning those knives in. We had very few discipline problems.

I commented that I noticed the respect that all of the children had for Mrs. Lowe from the first time I began teaching at Westfield in 1967. "When the kids went into that new building [1956], that did something to them, and it did something for the parents. They found out that they could do something, that they could be somebody, if they really tried. They could say, 'Bernice Cox went to school, and her parents didn't have any money. We are

going to go.' Every family that I know of in this community have had at least three or four college graduates. I am not saying it is a result of [my efforts], but it built something into them that they then decided that they could do it. They didn't always have to have money to go to school. Eugene McCather had twelve children who attended Ridge-Westfield. I missed one, Deborah. Everyone of them finished college, and they did not have any money, I know they didn't. They finally got to the place that they could get loans, but in the beginning they could not. Another family that you know about is the Jessups. John Jessup has been a principal in Winston-Salem. I taught him, he got his foundation at Ridge-Westfield. We were proud of our little community. We tried to instill in our kids that they could be somebody if they wanted to be.

"This school was a source of pride for them. They didn't know what an indoor toilet was. All of them were tenant farmers, who had to pay with half their crops. This was how we ran our lunchroom. The kids would come to school and say that mama or daddy did not have any money and would ask to eat on credit. Yes. Some of them were faithful to pay the money back. When I made out the lunch report I had some who could eat free and some who paid. If they didn't pay, that meant that I had been embezzling the money. So at the end of the school year if they came

up short, I had to see that that money was put in. The best I can remember I was making $125.00 per month.

"We had no secretary. I had to do all of the reports. Julia had been the principal, but as quickly as she could, she put it off on me. They [Surry County Board of Education] were glad to give it to me, because I had an A certificate and a degree. Julia had worked and gone to summer schools to get her A certificate. They gave the principalship to me and I did all of the bookkeeping and bus reports when we got a bus in 1959.

"Our kids would ride the [Jones] high school bus which would put them off at Ridge-Westfield. They finally gave us one bus, and that bus had to cover most of the county and part of Stokes County, too, because they [Stokes County] didn't have a school near Westfield.

I noted that when the Stokes County students were riding the buses to Westfield, we had a total of six buses to cover the district, and four after the Stokes students could no longer ride.

"The bus was just packed with kids. Those that were able, who lived not far away, walked to school. Until then they were hauled in cars."

I then wanted to talk to Mrs. Lowe about the loss of a school. She had lost Ridge-Westfield which she and her family had attended and which she and her sister had so devotedly served throughout their careers.

"Well, the law was passed that the schools had to be integrated. We did have some white kids from the Flat Rock community who said they were coming to Ridge-Westfield to keep the school from being closed. They lived in a black community. Their children had played together. They had just as soon their children come there as anywhere, just as long as they were taught. They were tenant farmers, too, poor people. It did not materialize. The Surry superintendent had told us that if the white students came, the school would not be closed. But, they did that for maybe two or three weeks and later they closed the school down. This was in 1966.

"It was sad. It was a sad time, because we realized that we were losing something. We would probably be losing our culture and our identity and everything. We would not have as big a say in our school as we had been having over our kids. We tried to prepare the children. We told them that regardless of what happened, 'You go to school to learn. You go to school to improve yourself, to help improve you race. I don't care what happens in school, the thing that you are going for is to learn. If the teacher is teaching anything, you get it. What you get in your head, nobody can take it away from you. Your purpose in going to school is to learn, not to fight and keep up a disturbance. It doesn't make any difference what they call you.' You know then 'nigger' was a big

word. People didn't know that a nigger who had no particular color, but was just a low-down person. They thought that was referring to them. We tried to instill in them that that did not make a bit of difference, unless they decided to let it. I said 'Somebody can call you a dog. You look down and see if you've got four legs. That would make a dog. You wouldn't be a dog, that would just be a lie. If you act like what they call you then that is what you are.' I really think that it helped our kids to make it through."

I asked Mrs. Lowe if the identity was indeed lost. "It probably happened to some of the kids. But I can truthfully say that when I went to Westfield I didn't lose anything. I gained a lot of friends. I wouldn't have wanted to have been treated any better. I went there to work and gain because that was my job. I knew that some of the parents were skeptical of me. Even some of them did not want their kids in my room, because they didn't know me. I can understand that. I wouldn't want my child going somewhere that I didn't know what was going to happen to them if I had been told all the time that 'These people are "boogeymen," they'll get you!' I remember so very well one little girl. Her mother did not want her in my room, she just did everything she could to keep her out. At the end of the school, the child cried because

she did not want to be promoted and said, 'I won't get to be in Mrs. Lowe's room. I think I gained some friends."

This was a revelation to me. I started teaching at Westfield in 1967 only one year after integration and saw no problems at all. Mrs. Lowe told me that integration went the smoothest at Westfield of any school in the county. I had thought that integration at Westfield had occurred while I was at college, for there had been two black girls who attended East Surry High during my senior year of 1963-1964.

"The first year [1966] I started teaching [at Westfield] I think that I had the ideal class. There was Jeannette Hunter, Sherri Jessup, Phil Sutphin and Mark Tilley. I think that their parents had told them to be respectful. It seemed to be something different about the kids. They were so nice and so mannerly. None of them gave me any trouble. I was teaching the sixth grade and I hadn't taught the sixth grade in a good while, but that was just an ideal class. I won't ever forget them. They were a nice group of kids. Out of that group I had two black girls, Ann Ceasar and Vicky McCarther. All the rest of them were white kids. It was a big class, about thirty-five or forty.

"The next year [1967] Mr. Norman Smith came as principal. I had been looking at the special education kids. My heart just went out to them. I felt that I

could do something for those kids. I guess we had some retarded kids at Ridge-Westfield, but there were not that many of them together. We didn't have a special class for them, they were just integrated with the other kids. I was going to lunch one day with Mr. Smith and I told him that I would like to teach those kids. Now some of the black teachers said they were forced into special education, but I asked for it. I stayed there until it was required that I have a special certificate. I was not going back to school, it was too near retirement, and I moved to the fourth grade. But I enjoyed those kids."

I then asked Mrs. Lowe how she felt about Westfield School being closed and if she saw it as being moved out of the community. "I do see it as being moved out of the community. That was a landmark and that is something that the people of the community just looked forward to. I don't believe they will continue to have the closeness that they had with each other. That was their center. The center of their meetings and everything that they desired to do centered around that school. This is almost like setting up a new community, that is the way that I feel about it. Closing a school down like that is almost like losing a member of the family because it has become so close to the people. This is the second school that I have lost, I really felt close to Westfield because the people there were so nice. I was the only black teacher

there. There was never any discrimination against me in any way. My nephew Robert Leo Cox went there for half a year, that first year, but he didn't stay. He went to work for the Yadkin Valley Economic Development. He thought he was getting a promotion. He was young and didn't understand that you give some and you take some. I just went in there like another person, and that is the way they treated me, the whole community. I had very little difficulty with any of the parents."

I commented that Mrs. Lowe not only had the respect of the black community and students, but that her reputation had preceded her to Westfield. "A lot of the kids I taught, I didn't know that I knew a lot of their parents when I was growing up. We were surrounded by white people. We were the only black people in the community and had grown up playing together. The white students would come and tell me that I had played with their grandparents. My brother had lived with your granddaddy for years."

We then talked about local control of the schools. I asked her whether, when she first started teaching at Chestnut Ridge School, the local community had more input into the school. "They did. They had more say, and it seemed that it caused their interest to be higher. I think that there should be a lot of local control in the community. Because, who would want to do anything better.

A community is just like a home. As a community grows so grow the people within the community. Naturally the people who live in Westfield are going to be more interested in the students than the people who live in Dobson or Raleigh or Washington, DC. The people who live in the community can do more for the community. States are built upon communities. If every group is interested in its own community and works to see that you have a good community, [then there are] good citizens in that community. Good citizens are built in the schools. If the teachers are interested in the kids and the community and try to see that everyone becomes a good citizen, that is going to spread out across the state, and from the state to the nation. I think that what has really happened to cause us to be in such a bad shape in America with so much crime and violence is because people have lost interest in their communities. Someone has taken control of their communities and the citizens have decided to let them run it, and nobody is running anything. Everybody is just going wild, the kids are going wild. They have lost respect for the teachers. They have lost respect for the law enforcement officers. The law enforcement officers are supposed to be built within the community. We aren't supposed to have to go to Winston-Salem to find someone to serve in Surry County, that's not right. That is the same thing that I say about

teachers. A local teacher will do more good than one you bring in from the outside, because he or she is more interested in everything that takes place in that community, because he or she is trying to build a better place to live. So naturally he or she is going to be more interested than a person who just comes for five days a week and can't wait for time to leave."

Mrs. Lowe noted earlier that at Chestnut-Ridge they had a fourth teacher from Winston-Salem who came for only five days per week. "That's all. She wouldn't live in the community. She wouldn't board with anyone. All the money she made went back to that county. She took the money from our county and took it back to her county to spend', said Mrs. Lowe laughing. "That wasn't the reason she didn't come back. She got a better job."

Mrs. Lowe mentioned that there was a local school committee made up of three black citizens. "They tried to select them from a wide area, probably as large as Westfield and Flat Rock School Districts combined. They tried to get one from every section, the white local committee, too. Mr. Hauser's daddy was one, and so was Glenn Payne. Sometimes if we had any problems with the black school, we could go to them and get it settled. The black committee could go to the superintendent but sometimes he would send them back and tell them to settle

it within the community. Then we would get together with the white committee and work everything out."

I then asked Mrs. Lowe about her experiences in teaching any of her own three daughters. "I taught LaShene [currently a teacher of exceptional children at Westfield School]. She will tell you that maybe I was one of the toughest teachers she had. I taught her in the seventh and eighth grades at Ridge-Westfield. It seemed to me that maybe I was stricter on her than I was on some of the other children. The other kids were always looking to see if she was the pet, if I was making any difference."

I then asked Mrs. Lowe how she thought the moving of the school would affect the community. Mrs. Lowe thought for a moment and said, "That is a hard question. I believe that the community is going to lose its interest in some of its meetings. That was a meeting place where they could meet for someone who was sick or disadvantaged. I don't believe that they are going to have the same freedom that they had when the school was right here in Westfield. I may be wrong, but I don't think they will have that same privilege that they had of doing things as a community when it was a local school. It is still a local school, but there are other communities involved."

Mrs. Lowe felt that the black community never came to see Westfield School as their own school after

Ridge-Westfield was merged into Westfield School in 1966. "The parents didn't attend the PTA meetings the way they did when they were at their own school. They didn't come to see about their children or to see what they were doing. Only a few of the parents came to see about their kids. Those were probably those whose kids started out as first-graders at Westfield. But those who had had children up at Ridge-Westfield School never really felt that they were a part of the school. They felt as though they were outsiders. That is one of the problems. It may not be this way at the new school that they have built, because the people know one another. They will all be in a new place together. Everything is going to be new. But when the school is already there and established, those going in feel that 'I am an outsider. This is not really mine. This is their school and we are just coming to it.'"

I asked Mrs. Lowe if she felt that the people of Westfield would come to see the new school as a part of the community. "Maybe they will."

I commented that I knew personally that many of the black students over the years felt that Westfield was their school, especially the Cokleys, relatives of Mrs. Lowe. "Yes they did. That was just as much their school as anyone's. That is because their kids started

kindergarten there. It was the only school that they knew, that made the difference."

Mrs. Lowe explained that the Ridge-Westfield School had been sold to the Chestnut Ridge Primitive Baptist Church which was located next door. This provided a focus, a center for meetings for the black community. She noted that "it would be a good thing if they would leave some of the buildings at Westfield for a recreation area for the community. Since it has been there for so long, it would be good if, for nothing else, they would just leave the gym or maybe build a recreational center around there for the community."

I then asked Mrs. Lowe to verify a story I had heard about the Westfield Colored School. One of the black parents had gone to John Lowe, a member of the local school committee and told him that the blacks needed a new school. John had told the parent that if the school burned, they would get a new school. The school burned that night. "Yes, that is true," said Mrs. Lowe with a smile, "that is a true story. That building was worse in shape than our wooden building. That building was an old building, put up locally. The one that they built was not in that bad of a shape when they moved out of it. It was a nice little two-room school."

When I asked Mrs. Lowe if she had any thoughts about the Westfield students who would be attending the

new Pilot Mountain Middle School, she asked, "Are they transferring any Westfield teachers over there?" I explained that only Richard Hauser would be one of the veterans to transfer to the middle school while the other K-5 teachers would be going to staff the new Westfield School. She then commented, "Some of those kids who live in Pilot Mountain might feel that the school is their home and that the children from Westfield and Shoals were outsiders coming in. I am just wondering about that. I hope that it doesn't work out that way. Maybe they already have some friends and will make friends. The only rivalry they had was in sports. If the kids become good friends, it will work out. That is the main thing, if the children like each other."

Toward the end of the conversation, I commented that I had always felt that the smooth transition as the black Ridge-Westfield students merged into the white Westfield School was in large part due to the presence of Mrs. Lowe who was not only a former teacher and principal at Ridge-Westfield and leader in the church, but also served as a role model to the black children. "They need a role model. I wish that in every school they could have at least one black teacher. That would make a difference in their conduct, in the way the kids strive to do their work. If they think that they are not going to become anything, if they think they are not going to get a

teaching position, they might not think that if they could see just one black teacher."

Agreeing with Mrs. Lowe for the need for black teachers in the schools, as a white male teacher, I asked her if she felt that male teachers were also needed in the elementary schools. "Certainly, because I can tell you this, this applies not only to the schools, but to the church as well. My son-in-law goes up there to work with the junior choir, it makes all the difference in the world. They see a man helping them. We've had several black teachers from this community who were excellent: John Jessup, Thomas Dodd. We've had several black female teachers. Out of LaShene's class at Ridge-Westfield [Class of 1970], every one of them finished college except one who married and now she is going back to Surry Community College. The class was not that big, there were only about fifteen of them, but they did it."

Mrs. Bernice Cox Lowe Interview: Interpretation. Mrs. Bernice Lowe's greatest contribution to my understanding of the Westfield community and its school came from her discussion of the black community. The one-room Westfield Colored School was built in 1900 and burned in 1913. It was rebuilt as a two-room school in 1915 and remained until 1947 when it was consolidated with the Chestnut Ridge School. Chestnut Ridge School was built in 1920 for black children with funds contributed by

members of the black community and the Julius Rosenwald Foundation. When the Westfield Colored School was closed and its students consolidated into Chestnut Ridge School in 1947, the name of the school was changed to Ridge-Westfield School. The building was replaced by a modern brick facility in 1956 which was used until 1966 when all the schools in Surry County were integrated. The building is still in good condition and belongs to the Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church which is adjacent. Mrs. Lowe has lived and taught all of her life in the Westfield community beginning at the all-black Chestnut-Ridge School, serving as a teacher and principal of the all-black consolidated Ridge-Westfield School and retiring from the integrated and formerly all-white Westfield School. The greatest boundary that was implied throughout the conversation with Mrs. Lowe was that of race. At a young age, she encountered both physical and racial boundaries. "I expect I walked eight miles a day to school. We had an adjoining farm, but the [white] people who owned the land between the farms would not allow us to cross their land, so we had to walk around their farm." She rather consistently refers to Ridge-Westfield as "ours", while they Westfield School community is often mentioned as "theirs." She speaks of "white schools," "white churches," and "there was not a high school for us in the county then." The fact that the

only high school for blacks in the county was located in Mount Airy and that there were "poor records" from Ridge-Westfield speak to a very different social setting from that described by the other teachers.

The black community of Westfield represented a class different from kind the white community. Mrs. Lowe's parents and many of her peers were not formally educated. Therefore, the issues involved are not only those of race, but also of a social and educational background. In a seemingly contradictory situation, she even felt some inverted discrimination from her own community when she returned from college. "There was a lot of jealousy, because I was the first person in the black community who was sent out of the community and graduated from college." Thus the notion of class, not only in relation to the white community, but also within the black community, overlaps with the white community.

She further recognized economic boundaries which could have potentially separated her from other students at Winston-Salem State. Through academic achievement and extra curricular activities, however, she could proudly state, "But I was right in there!" Thus she felt that she had found her place, that she was accepted by the other students whom she perceived as more advantaged. As with the other teachers, personal intervention was vitally important. Not only did her relationships with her

college classmates help her, but she spoke of a personal contact with the President of WSSU, who allowed her to enter and continue her education with limited funds.

The poor conditions of her living standards, Westfield Colored School, and Ridge-Westfield School, including lack of buses, a cafeteria, and toilets, are addressed factually and largely as a background to emphasize the achievements of her sister, herself, and other citizens of the black community. That Ridge-Westfield suffered is demonstrated in her statements that local problems referred to the county superintendent of schools were often sent back to the local white Westfield committee to resolve jointly with the black local board. Thus, even while there was a strong sense of community in Westfield, there was also divisiveness.

Mrs. Lowe sees family, school, and church as joint partners in building good citizens. To Mrs. Lowe, being a good citizen is defined largely as being socially responsible. As she went off to college her parents felt that she was "old enough to take care of herself and not to get into any trouble." Participating in community events, especially those associated with the school and the church are also important. "I think it is very important for a teacher to live within her community, because teaching school does not stop at the end of the day; that is a continuous process. If you are going to be

a good citizen, you have got to have an interest in the community where they [students] are living." Respect for authority is implied in her definition of a good citizen, that is, respect not only for community, church, and school leaders, but also for legal authority. "Out of that group we were teaching, nobody had any involvement with the law. You did not hear of them getting into a lot of trouble, because there was a kind of respect." The concept of respect is also instrumental in her handling of the situation of some students bringing knives to school.

Mrs. Lowe also sees achievement as a mark of a good citizen, especially in educational goals. "They found out that they could do something, that they could be somebody if they really tried. They could say, 'Bernice Cox went to school, and her parents didn't have any money. We are going to go." Every family that I know of in this community had at least three or four college graduates. I'm not saying that it is a result of [my efforts], but it built something into them that they then decided that they could do it."

With respect for others and educational achievement as the foundations for becoming good citizens, Mrs. Lowe implied self-esteem is also enhanced. "We were proud of our little community. We tried to instill in our kids that they could be somebody if they wanted to be." As the matriarch of her family, as was her late mother, and as a

former teacher, principal and life-long leader of her church, Mrs. Lowe exemplifies the strong bonds among these three institutions and the importance of personal intervention.

Mrs. Lowe discussed the same notions of connections between the school and the community as did the other teachers. She sees local schools as the foundation which serves to build good citizens for the county, state, and nation. "States are built upon communities. If every [local] group is interested in their own community, [they will] work to see that you have a good community, good citizens in that community." She strongly believes that schools serve as the foundation for good citizens and exist to serve the community: "Good citizens are built in the schools. If the teachers are interested in the kids and the community and try to see that everyone becomes a good citizen, that is going to spread out across the state, and from the state to the nation."

In order for the community school to serve the community, Mrs. Lowe believes that a critical factor is the local teacher. "A local teacher will do more good that one you bring in from the outside, because he or she is interested in everything that takes place in the community, because he or she is trying to build a better place to live." Because her life has been intertwined with devotion to her family, her school, and her church,

she has used these bonds to build students of outstanding citizenship and achievement, although nearly all began from very modest economic backgrounds.

The poor conditions of the Westfield School, and the original Ridge-Westfield School are quite remarkable, even for the times in which they existed. Mrs. Lowe was able to see a new modern facility built at Ridge-Westfield which was closed due to racial integration even though, by any criteria, it was a physical facility superior to the Westfield School. "This school was a source of pride for them." It now belongs to Mrs. Lowe's Chestnut Ridge Primitive Baptist Church which has always been adjacent. In reference to Westfield School, she noted "that was a landmark and that is something that the people of the community just looked forward to. I don't believe they will continue to have the closeness that they had with each other. That was their center. Their meetings and everything that they desired to do centered around that school. This is almost like setting up a new community; that is the way I feel about it." Although Mrs. Lowe is comparing two schools, and in a sense two communities, black and white, she points to the pride and the centeredness both schools represented to their respective communities.

Mrs. Lowe sees the moving of the school as a cause for the community to "lose interest in some of its

meetings. That [Westfield School] was a meeting place where they could meet for someone who was sick or disadvantaged. I don't believe they are going to have the same freedom that they had when the school was right here in Westfield." Because students from the communities of Holly Springs, South Westfield, and the Town of Pilot Mountain will be attending the new Westfield School, Mrs. Lowe sees these as potentially competing interests in using the school as a community resource, such as a meeting place for community functions. "I may be wrong, but I don't think they will have the same privilege that they had of doing things as a community when it was a local school. It is still a local school, but there are other communities involved [now]." It is interesting that Mrs. Lowe refers to the citizens as "they" as opposed to "we." Perhaps she is referring to the parents of current students, but more likely she is addressing the white parents, which again speaks to her own alienation.

Mrs. Lowe believed that the local citizens felt they had a greater control of Ridge-Westfield School in earlier years. "It caused their interest to be higher. I think there should be a lot of local control in the community." Perhaps the neglect of the local white school committee and the county administration was the greatest impetus to cause the local black community to support their own school. Mrs. Lowe again has stressed the

importance of personal intervention and similar notions of community, but she is speaking within a different realm.

Mrs. Lowe sees a hierarchy of control from the community, to the county, the state and the nation, with those closest to the school having the most interest. She sees the schools as serving the community. "The people who live in the community can do more for the community. States are built upon communities."

Certainly Mrs. Lowe sees local control as being the basis upon which good schools are built. She and her sister worked for many years to increase school attendance, set up bus routes, serve hot meals, and strengthen other nonacademic areas. This was largely done through their own initiative without support from the central administration, but with the support of the black community.

She further sees that the standards for good communities largely come from local teachers. "A local teacher will do more good than one you bring in from outside, because he or she is more interested in everything that takes place in the community, because she or she is trying to build a better place to live. So naturally he or she is going to be more interested than a person who just comes in for five days a week and can't wait for time to leave."

Mrs. Lowe strongly feels that it is important for a teacher to live and teach in the same community. "If you are going to be a good citizen, you have to have an interest in the community in which they are living. They [citizens] have got to be interested in you." Mrs. Lowe feels a powerful integration between the church and the school, which also points to her personal intervention. "We found that out by working with our kids through Sunday, there was some respect . . . If they did something at church on Sunday, we were able to discipline them when they came to school on Monday . . . we were building some good citizens." Certainly Mrs. Lowe as principal, teacher and daughter of the founder of the church which was next door to the school, was able to exert significant influence upon her students fully six days of the week.

For Mrs. Lowe, professionalism counted more than her membership in the community. If she was not a member of the community, she was nevertheless a good teacher. This can be interpreted as an argument for professionalism for although one might not be of the same race, religion, social class, or economic background, one can be judged as an equal in terms of performance alone. In speaking of the integration of Ridge-Westfield and Westfield in 1966, Mrs. Lowe noted, "I just went in there like every other person, and that is the way they treated me, the whole community. I had very little difficulty with any of the

parents . . . . I was the only black teacher there. There was never any discrimination against me in any way . . . But I can truthfully say that when I went to Westfield I didn't lose anything. I gained a lot of friends. I wouldn't have wanted to have been treated any better. I went there to work and gain because that was my job." Although she felt that "white parents resented," she felt that she belonged. This speaks to her struggle. The fact that she felt the principal problem was that the white parents "didn't know me" verifies the importance she places on personal relationships and the scale of this personal intervention. She understood that some white children had been taught to perceive of blacks as "boogeymen," but also that this could be overcome when they came to know her on a personal basis.

I also believe that coming to know a person is very important. I know Mrs. Lowe very well as a professional, for we taught as peer teachers for several years until her retirement. Although I feel that I have come to know her better through this conversation, I found her conversation to be the more difficult to interpret because I do not know her personally as well as I do other teachers. Beneath our conversation about the school lies the notion that conversations such as these between the white teachers and white parents and between Mrs. Lowe and the black parents have already been held over a number of

years. By the time the students entered school, a great deal of personal connection had already occurred as a consequence of everyday life in the church, civic meetings, and other social settings within the community.

Such conversations did not occur prior to integration between Mrs. Lowe and the white students or between the white teachers and the black students. Therefore, the integration of Ridge-Westfield School and Westfield School resulted in the loss of identity for the black students. As Mrs. Lowe noted, "It probably happened to some of the [black] kids." The black parents did not participate in school functions at Westfield as they had at Ridge-Westfield. "They didn't come to see about their children or to see what they were doing. Only a few of the parents came to see about their kids. Those were probably those whose kids started out as first-graders at Westfield. But those who had children up at Ridge-Westfield School never really felt they were a part of the school. They felt as though they were outsiders."

The mixed feelings that Mrs. Lowe expresses about the integration of the schools is also felt by others who see integration as a professional imposition which in some ways is parallel to the closing of Westfield School. Professionally, while Mrs. Lowe believes that integration of the schools and the closing of the schools of Ridge-Westfield School and now Westfield School are for the

best,it came at a cost of a tradition, community, and identity. Therefore, this is another example of the clash between the professional and the community.

In terms of place, Mrs. Lowe has been alienated from the white schools. She did feel that she was as an integral part of the white school systems. So her sense of place is determined not only by geography, but also of race. Her comment "You go to school to improve your race" is a very different notion from that given by the white teachers. Mrs. Lowe has a place in a positive sense in that she is defined by her membership in the black community. In a negative sense, she is defined by the boundary between the black and the white community. Therefore, Mrs. Lowe defines herself not only by place, but by race. The fact that Mrs. Lowe did not directly state these point is indicative of a boundary that exists between her and myself. However, I believe that the interpretation that was just mentioned is in the interview, and is a reasonable interpretation, although it required "reading between the lines" to obtain this analysis. This also points to the inherent differences between the interviews and the interpretations of the interviews.

At Ridge-Westfield School, Mrs. Lowe, following and working with her sister, Julia, as both principal and teacher, though she had limited resources, experienced

limited personal control of the school. The fact that Julia taught she went to high school speaks to the quality of the school. "We had no secretary, I had to do all of the reports." Through her creativity and influence upon the local black school committee, the white committee of Westfield School, and the Surry County Board of Education, she, her sister and other parents were able to get bus service, a lunchroom, and ultimately not only saved the school from being moved, but saw a new modern facility built on the site.

Because her older sister Julia was eager to let Mrs. Lowe assume responsibility and combined with her regular "A" certificate, she quickly became the school principal while also teaching. It was during her tenure and largely through her efforts that a lunchroom and bus service were begun.

She had to struggle with a hierarchy of men and therefore she had to extend the conversation. I spoke recently with a principal who related the first time that Mrs. Lowe attended the monthly principal meetings with the superintendent about 1963, many years after she had become principal of Ridge-Westfield.

An example of how Mrs. Lowe coped with powerlessness was in her instructions to the black students as the systems were about to be integrated. "Don't let them call you 'nigger'." Mrs. Lowe was

actually teaching the children how to deal with alienation.

Mrs. Lowe came from a family that was largely self-sufficient. Members of the family assisted each other in their work and achieving their life goals. Mrs. Lowe sees her nieces, nephews, and indeed, her former students as her extended family whom she serves not only in many cases as a surrogate mother, but as a role model in the sense that she came from a modest background, but was able to gain an education and assist others to do the same. "They need a role model. I wish that in every school they could have at least one black teacher. That would make a difference in their conduct, in the way the kids strive to do their work. If they think that they are not going to become anything, if they think they are not going to get a teaching position, they might not think that if they could see just one black teacher."

Mrs. Lowe feels not only personal pride in seeing her own family achieve successfully, but other members of the community as well. "Out of LaShene's class at Ridge-Westfield [Class of 1970], every one of them finished college except one who married and now she is going back to Surry Community College. The class was not that big, there were only about fifteen of them, but they did it."

She noted the loss of Westfield School as the loss of a meeting place for the community. However, her statements concerning the close of Ridge-Westfield School imply an even greater social loss. This was a different community from the Westfield Community addressed by the other teachers; this is the black community. It is important to note, however, that she is making the same point. "It was sad. It was a sad time, because we realized that we were losing something. We would probably be losing our culture and our identity and everything. We would not be able to have as big a say in our school as we had been having over our kids." Mrs. Lowe regretted not only the lost identity for the students, but the alienation felt by their parents, "The parents didn't attend the PTA meetings the way they did when they were at their own school. They didn't come to see about their children or how they were doing. Only a few of the parents came to see about their kids. Those were those whose kids had started out as first-graders at Westfield. But those who had had children at Ridge-Westfield School never really felt that they were a part of the school. They felt as though they were outsiders."

The paradox of community is the fact that being inclusive also makes it exclusive. Mrs. Lowe recognizes that even though she has lived largely outside the white community of Westfield, her role as an educator allowed

her to cross the racial boundary to a great extent. Her final comment on the school closing concerns the loss to both communities and is both poignant and inclusive. "Closing a school down like that is almost like losing a member of the family because it has become so close to the people. That is the second school I have lost."

Fletcher Vance Dearmin, III Interview:
June 9, 1993

Three years younger than I, Van Dearmin and I grew up about one-half mile from each other in the Johnstown community of Stokes County. Our fathers are cousins and life-long friends. His mother, a retired nurse is also a family friend. He is a native of Westfield and attended school there until the eighth grade. He has been an eighth-grade teacher and coach at Pilot Mountain Elementary School, where his taught before her current assignment at the new Westfield Elementary School. He has been an assistant principal at North Surry High School and served as the first assistant principal at Central Middle School. In 1992 he was appointed principal of Flat Rock Elementary School, and is now serving as the first principal of the new Pilot Mountain Elementary School. We met in his temporary office at Central Middle School, which he has been using for the past month while Pilot Elementary School is being converted into a middle school.

During our interview, Van spoke without stopping for almost one hour, glancing at the suggested questions I had prepared.

"Middle school is not necessarily traditional. Everybody cannot work in a middle school and be successful, anybody can be there. What we did at a K-5 school this year is we took a lot of the concepts in middle school and put them to work. They can work at any school.

"The basic assumptions behind this concept are that it is okay to tell kids, teachers and other people that you love them and care about them; that you can try do the job as best you can and have the most fun possible; that laughing and carrying on a little bit is acceptable; that you have to have a curriculum and guidelines like all the other programs, except in this you try to allow people to be themselves more. You try to say to kids that it is okay, there is not one way that you have to be. It is okay not to be a straight 'A' student. Its okay not to be the most popular person in the world as long as you are trying to be the best person you can be, as long as you are gaining ground, and as long as you're enjoying life a little bit.

"I believe in middle schools because I have seen them work. When we opened Central Middle School three years ago, I never will forget those first days when we

met with those teachers. We had a few people who had had some training and background. In the middle school I am going to open next year, I've got nobody but me. It is really going to be tough. But a lot of them, especially Doug Cook at Dobson, had allowed his teachers to team, so they already knew and they had already felt it. It is a special feeling. There is no way that you can tell teachers what it is like to team until you live it. Not only is it good for kids, but I think it brings out professionalism. It allows teachers to say that it is okay to help other teachers. The lead teachers at my school next year at Pilot Mountain have no idea what they are going to do. That is why the key is getting people who are lead teachers. You can take a couple of teachers who are average. I saw some people who came out who had never come out in their lives before. They will never go back. Middle school feels good. It is a good feeling. You smile almost every day because you have got other people who can listen to your problems. A team becomes almost like a family.

"The reason I think that this is so important at this time in our country is because my wife had a child in her room the other day who was disappointed because they didn't have a stepfather or stepmother and everyone else did have stepbrothers or stepsisters. We have reached a time where the family has more or less, in a lot of ways,

disappeared in this country. I still think that kids want a family. I thin that if the school family can in some way take that place, that is what happens in middle schools.

"That is why good middle school teams have got to have males. And that is why we need more males, not only in middle schools, but in K-5 schools or whatever. I think that the main reason I made a difference at Flat Rock was that I was a male and we had a whole bunch of women there. But yet I gave them that other perspective. As one teacher told me, 'You showed them that you can be a guy, and there is not stereotype, you don't have to be just one way.'

"Middle school also gives the teachers a base for saying 'I don't know this, can you help me find this out?', or in meeting on discipline with the parents. It is so much more effective than say, when you brought your son to me and two other professionals and you're mad at me. That is okay, because you think I'm the villain, as a principal or as a member of the team. A lot of times the principal does meet with the whole team, it is a family affair. And you will be amazed how parents' viewpoints about their child will change when they hear it from other professionals on their team, or the principal who is not necessarily the one who they are mad at. But who can say, 'okay Johnny has had these problems in my room' or 'Johnny

has exhibited these traits or characteristics in my room.' It is like having a team of doctors. It is okay to have a specialist, but if you could have two or three specialists, that makes it even that much more special.

"So not only is it good for the child, in giving the child a family-like atmosphere, but in giving him advocates, people who care about him. In a school of four hundred or five hundred or six hundred kids, a lot of kids get lost. We particularly say this in high school. I remember at North Surry, when we had about 1500 kids in the early '70s. I saw kids go across the stage [at graduation] that I had never seen. We lose a lot of those kids. I think that the top guns are going to do good, anywhere. The top kids are going to do good. And yet they could gain more ground by going to a school of the arts or a governor's school or whatever. But I think that for most kids [the middle school concept is best]. I think as we get into cooperative learning and find that kids can learn from kids, the middle school and the team concept has allowed that to develop also. It gives you lots of different ways of attacking an individual problems with children, socially, academically, the whole ball park is covered. So, those areas are very special and I have seen them work. Any school can take a lot of these concepts. The high schools here in Surry County, when they go to the 4-4, and the teachers are having an hour

and a half class. They are going to have to develop new teaching methods. We have become lecturers. We have become dependent on the book. We spit out facts. We test and the kids spit those facts back, and we go on and say that the child has an education. I think that right now in North Carolina, the way we are testing and the middle school concept we are starting to say that what we have done is wrong. We have not done what is right for kids, we have not done right by kids, for a long time. We have let Raleigh dictate what goes on and we have not asked the people here. I guarantee you that I can take people from Central Middle School, Pilot Middle School, the professionals who have been there and do a better job than anyone in Raleigh has ever thought about doing because we know what is going on. We are there, we feel the pulse, the heart everyday. There is nothing anymore special than seeing an at-risk kid or one that nobody thinks has got a chance, come back. It will happen, it has happened here. I used to get those kids in the hall when we would have visitors, and I would say 'Come here I want you to see so-and so, this kid was loser at the first of the year.' You know they really like it. 'This kid has really come around. He is a gentleman, his grades have improved, tell these folks something about yourself.' And kids are willing to admit 'I was glad to be famous for anything, if it was bad that's okay, I am going to go ahead and do it.'

Children will do that. We have got to find ways to allow children to be successful.

"I did my graduate program through Gardner-Webb. A lot of graduate stuff is not worth two-cents. Most graduate programs don't deal with reality. But Gardner-Webb based the whole crux of their program on Purkey's book Invitational Education. Invitational education went along with what I believed in. I first got my master's in physical education and then later on in administration. It all applies to the same thing. This works for teachers, too. If you find enough ways to allow teachers and students to be successful, they will be. If you shut them off in the beginning, you can't fool teachers, you can't fool kids, and you can't fool people. They know how you feel. If you invite success, the chances are that you are going to have some type of success. It may not be as much as you want, but you will win some battles. If you set it up to be nonsuccessful, it won't happen. I think to be successful, in any middle school or any school, you have got to go in that school and you've got to find out who are the bad guys. Who are the people that kids are looking up to for the wrong reasons? Because that started to happen this year at Flat Rock, I identified ten. I hoped to win with five, and we won with seven. The reason that I know is because the parents of two of those kids told me yesterday, 'Ya'll

changed my child. He wants to go to school. He wants to go to Gentry [Middle School] next year. He already plans on graduating from high school. He has never done that before.' That was with middle school concepts, inviting success. We did some things over there this year for rewards, skating parties for so much reading and so much areas of behavior. The kids wrote me letters. That jumps out at me. You have got to reward the kids for good things. We had the best writing scores in the county for sixth grade this year. We celebrated success. In this country we have taken success for granted. Students and teachers want you to celebrate success. I am the same way. All of us are.

"So I see a lot of benefits for children, I see benefits for the kids from the fact that you set up a network that is looking for everything positive and it become contagious. If you start seeing a teacher who has never before never said much, never shown much enthusiasm, and all of a sudden you are at a team rally, and you see them by the time the year is out that they are pumped up, jumping and hollering.

"We have really done bad by teachers in this country, too. I really believe that. I have seen some this year. I had three teachers this year, about whom I was told by others were losers. Everyone of those people improved. One of them actually probably developed one of

the best media programs in this county, because we gave them a piece of the rock. If I tell them that it is my school, it's not my school, I am the caretaker. I have to make some "yucky" decisions, but you sell them on the fact that it is their school, and that is the truth. A lot of principals get caught up in ego trips, 'I've done this for twenty-two years!' Being a principal is not the greatest. It is a yucky job. Anyone who thinks that it is a glory ride is totally wrong. The main thing that I know that I have done is to make a difference in students and teachers. That is really the satisfaction that I get out of it. Sometimes we get too much credit and sometimes we get too much blame. But the key is giving your faculty and giving your children a piece of the rock. Telling them what is important, and if they believe in you enough . . . That is just like in the middle school concept the word love comes up a lot. I am a loving person by nature. If I really care about someone, it is easy for me to tell them that. It is kind of shocking to a lot of them. But once they really trust you, then that is the key.

"Next year I have got to go to Pilot Mountain. The first thing that I have got to do, number one, win over the children. They have got to know that I am going to listen to them, that I am going to respect what they say, that I am going to make a decision that is based not on whether they are black, white, red, poor, rich, Westfield

or Pilot, those thoughts will never enter my mind. To me a child is a child. Those thoughts will never enter my mind. The kids will see that. I will win the kids over, that will be the easiest battle I'll win. Next I've got a hard core faculty, most of them have taught over twenty years, who are saying, 'This guy, I don't know about him. He talks a good game, but what's going to happen?' They are going to watch everything I do in regard to discipline, in handling teachers who do poor performance. So I've got to go in there and I've got to make some examples and I have got to pick my spots. I can't be unfair, I can't harass people, because I really do believe this, although in the bottom of my heart I know it is unlikely, all our teachers will perform next year. Probably a couple won't. But then I have got to try to do the best I can to win them over, a least the majority of the staff, and then we are ready to go. Once they know that I care about them enough, and once they know that I am a risk taker, and I want them to take risks. Once they know that if they take a risk and mess up, it is okay, we are ready to fly! Because you have got your wings out and you are ready to soar. When they really believe that I love them, and I am bad to fall in love with teachers and students, its good but its risky. I am a risk taker. I am a big-time risk taker. I have courage in that area. Once that happens in a year or two we will start to see

things happen. It is going to be amazing! I believe I can sell them on the fact that we can become the best middle school in the state. Now whether we can or not, I don't know. But, we might give it a run, if we get them all sold on it.

"So all of that is middle school. There is no way you can give a definition of a middle school. Middle school is more feeling that anything else. Middle school can apply to any grades. You gave grades six, seven and eight for most people. But the concepts, of love, and the concepts of family, and the concepts of caring for each other, the power that is unleashed is unbelievable. I have seen it happen. I used to always wonder . . . When I coached my kids played harder than any other kids, except maybe Richard Hauser [of Westfield. Van's former teacher and coach who will be a faculty member at Pilot Middle School], and he changed too. He went from fear to more caring. If they have to play hard, if you are teachers, or you are a basketball team, and they have to play for you out of fear, you can only reach a certain point. But if they play for you out of love, they will do whatever it takes, and you will get their whole heart and their whole soul. And that is the difference in having a great school. The greatest schools in this country have people who care about each other, from the top all the way to the bottom. We are going to apply it to the custodians. I

want the bus drivers, the cafeteria workers, I want them to smile when the kids walk in. I want the custodians to laugh and take pride in cleaning up the rooms. It all happens out of caring, and that is what middle school is. There is no doubt in my mind. That is exactly what it is. When we read that book by Purkey about invitational education, it all applied. This is just my philosophy. This is me, it all suited me. I remember the teachers that I have had who people said were good. They were not good. They were good for the top people. But for people who did not have an aptitude for that particular subject, or whatever, they were not good. They did more damage. I remember the teachers who damaged me and it will be hard for me to ever forgive them. At the time I thought that it was my fault. But it was not all my fault. So most of these things I have lived, and have stuck in my mind, and they just flow out of me. I don't know how to tell you, I am not a good planner. I know that is a weakness, and I am getting better, I know that is a weakness. I never know what I am going to say, I never know what I am going to do, I react to whatever is happening with the student or with the teacher. In public speaking, I have never written a speech. I told Pat Widdowson [Surry County Schools 6-12 Supervisor] one day, 'There will come a time.' You know I have stood up in front of a lot of people, and didn't really know what I was going to say,

and then it happens. I feed off people, that is how I get my high. When they hurt, I hurt with them. When they laugh, I am a good laugher, I love it. Laughter in a school, and crying together if you are hurting, is okay If you cry together and you laugh together, and you care about each other, then it is going to be amazing as to what is going to happen.

"All of that feeds over into the community. Flat Rock is a K-6 school, but we became a middle school. We actually did, probably more so that a lot of other places. You have got to take on the parents who come in and say 'I've such-and-such a problem all my life with these principals, teachers or whatever.' You have got to get them to focus. If they want to fuss and cuss, okay they can cuss me out and get it over with. 'But do you want to see what we can do to help your child? Your child is in trouble.' We got a lot of people to buy in, because it becomes family-oriented. You have to save an at-risk child, if you can't get the parents to buy in, if you can't get some outside force to buy in, you are going to lose that child eventually. We had a couple of kids this year. We had one who had to be sent to a group home in Yadkinville. His life will be saved. I talked to his grandmother yesterday. He has been taken out of that environment. There was nothing wrong with him. He could not fight off the strong will of bad things in his

environment and he was doomed. But now he has changed around. He has seen another way.

"All that applies to the fact that you have got to show teachers another way. You have got to show students there is another way; that it is okay to be different, that it is okay to strive in other ways that those that are traditional. I am a traditionalist in some ways and in a lot ways I am not. I know that basically what we have been doing in this country and in Surry County has not been working. I think that we are on a pathway now as far as whole language and the caring concepts. All that ties into the middle school. What we said this year to the K-3 kids was 'It's okay to misspell a word. It's okay not to be able to read a word. But learn to love to read and learn to love to write.'

"If we do that . . . Look at where we lose all of these kids. We have developed teachers and administrators in schools that lost so many people, and just kept letting it happen. That ties into middle school. And now with where we are going in high school, it is a complete package, K-12. It is the way to go to try to do the best for kids by saying, 'I'm never going to give up.'

"Valvano in his things when he said, 'Never, never give up.' We tend to give up. They did a song yesterday at Flat Rock, "Keep Smiling, Keep Shining', they all shine. Every kid shines. We had a little boy this year

who could not read. He did not make a sound for the first two days of school. I did not know if something was badly wrong with him. He came from a really rough environment. Do you know what? He improved more than any kid in our school. But yet we held him back. I called his Daddy, who I think is a Hell's Angel. I said, 'Brandon has improved more than anybody in this school, but he is not ready to go to the first grade. He had not failed, but we are going to keep him back one more year, to make sure that he doesn't fail when he gets to the first grade. How do you feel about it?' He bought in. I called him and he came to school drinking a couple of times. I said, 'You don't need to be coming up here with beer, you know. What you do at home is your own business, but it doesn't look good. We are trying to teach our kids that there are certain ways you need to do things. We are against alcohol and drugs, we do the DARE program, and others.'

"So middle school impacts [on] everything, the philosophy and concept, not just the grades themselves. Middle school can apply anywhere, from K through college. Look at college. My daughter this year is a freshman at UNCC. We have talked about education. She is going to become an educator. She will be good, because she has an aptitude for it. Kids are naturally drawn to her. That is where she should go. But the teachers she remembered, and we talked about them, were those teachers who she knew

cared. We have got to teach teachers and students that it is okay to care about one another. That is what middle school does.

"The community benefits because they see those things going on. The family benefits. It all ties into one package. There is no one certain way that you have to do it. Any teacher or any principal can take their personality and go with it, fly! There is no one certain way that you have got to fly. You can fly up high, low, down under, all those things.

"I think that as a consequence of the middle school approach you are going to see this thing take off. I think that you are going to see happier teachers. We have got to find principals; if you are by the book, you will never make it. If your belief is that a good school is one that is clean, the teachers come in and teach, there is order, and you go home at the end of the day, [then] you are doomed to be mediocre. Now that doesn't mean that it doesn't look good on paper. John Q. Public comes in and says "This is clean, nice flowers in the office, kids not walking around, kids not wearing hats, and teachers in their rooms. But we have got to have enough guts in this country. I want the parents to come in that school and come in that room, see what is going on and buy a piece of the rock. If we can do that, if we have got enough confidence and courage . . . The scariest thing to the

folks at Pilot Mountain Middle School for this [upcoming] year is that they are scared to death that people are going to know how they teach. At least two other members of their team are going to be with them every day in team planning and to talk about what is going on. I am going to come in there just to watch them teach. I have learned more in the last few years watching great teachers teach. I know what makes a great teacher, probably as well as anyone in this state. I have been everywhere, from K to 12 in the past few years. I see how it all ties together, and I see where we are losing these kids.

"We have got to sell teachers on the fact that it is okay if you mess up. It is okay to have a bad day. I tell my teachers when I am evaluating them to tell me if they are having a bad day and I will leave. Say, 'Please come back another day', and I will get up and leave. Everybody is not going to have a good day everyday.

"A lot of people say, that if there are drawbacks to the middle school, 'What about the top students?' I still think that the top students are going to be top. I think that teachers, by doing this a little bit, are going to find out that they can take those kids and do a little guidance, using the media person, or the AG person, or using Mom and Dad, can help them as far as they want to go, too. So I don't think that the top kids are going to be held back any.

"The reason that I am a better person in this world is that I grew up around all kinds of people. Rich people, poor people, black people, people who didn't speak English very well, people who didn't have anything but beans and potatoes for their whole lives, people who had the country club life. I know that I understand this world better because of that. This grouping thing, there is no telling how much damage we have done because of that. The reason that I know is that I went and asked a kid. I remember when I taught at Pilot Mountain Elementary School in the late 1980s. We grouped them A, B, C, and D. I was drawn to the 'D' group.

"The most miserable time I had coaching was when I had a team that won every football game, and did not give up a point during the season, not a one, zero, miserable. It was no fun. I had to worry about keeping my team from running up the score. But I had a team one time that was not supposed to win a game, and we won two or three games. We played hard every game. No one wanted to play us, nobody, and I don't blame them. They were like a bunch of little bees buzzing around.

In looking at middle schools in general, I don't see them going away. I think, more than anything else, it will meet the needs we have in society. I don't see society getting any better right now, unless the schools can make a difference. I think this is why people who are

out there don't understand how important it is to fund these schools. We have got schools that are doing a heck of a job and teachers bursting their rear ends everyday, and yet we have got people out there who are doing the government monies, state and local monies, who don't understand what is going on, and it's sad. The idea of letting the local schools have more empowerment and giving them a piece of the rock is good and that is the way to go. But I just don't know if our legislators and our government officials have enough courage to do that. They have held their thumb on the purse string for so long. I could take the money allotted for Pilot Mountain Middle School next year, if they would give me the money, and trust me, I could use it better dollar for dollar than they ever thought in making a good school. But yet everything is tied into this and this and this. Every year you have different needs. You don't need the same amount of library books every year. You don't need the same help every year. If they would let us do those things, but I don't know.

"Middle schools demand trust, they demand an administrator who is guidance oriented. In most of my first dealings with discipline problems, I really demand that the kids try to work it out. It is an amazing thing to see. Kids can do things that we don't think they can do. The approach of the faculty not using the office as a

first line of defense for discipline really bothers teachers. Teachers used to say 'Okay, you're going to the office.' But I will demand this year that every team have a discipline plan; that every team has contacted parents about discipline problems, and about the good things, too. That is one of the things that you have to encourage. If the only time that we ever talk to parents is about the bad things, then they are going to think badly of us. So that is why when we start this year we are going to call them and say 'We are glad that your son or daughter is a member of such-and-such a team. We want to do anything we can to help you. Call us at anytime.' That is why we will try to set up a couple of family nights where the team comes and they may have refreshments and play ball together. Parents can come, too, and the teachers and everybody is together. And of a sudden you are laying the seed for the idea that 'This school is pretty good.' We have got to change the images for what schools are like. Everybody thinks that schools are bad. Schools are not bad, those that I know about. People told me how bad Flat Rock School was. It was a lie, a flat-out lie. I don't believe that I have ever been in a place where I have felt any more love. When I went over there yesterday I got so many hugs I guarantee that I have marks on me. They were like a bunch of little ants getting around. People, and this is where we have schools and teachers doing the same

thing, we make judgements before we really know. Middle schools don't do that. Middle schools say, 'I believe that you are good until you prove differently.' That is what I am going to say to every kid next year. 'This is one of the few times that you can start over, I don't care what you have been like. I don't care if you have robbed banks, I don't care what you have done. You are going to have to prove to me that you are bad, because I think that you are good.' And I will say that to them, and I will say that to the ones that mess up at first again. Eventually we are going to lose some of them, I know that, but we won't lose as many. We are not going to lose many kids. We can't afford to, this country can not afford to. Until we get that philosophy started, at every school, high schools, K-5 schools, we are going to lose more than we should lose.

"Middle schools fit me so well. It is what I believe in. If you know me, and you do pretty well, if I don't believe in it, I am just not going to be able to talk about it. I believe in it because I have seen it work. I have seen it work in a K-6 school, I have seen it work in a middle school and it will work in a high school, once we reorient these people. School is for children, not for the adults. Teachers are hired to serve the children. We have got to change this thing around. I don't care what you teach, and how great you think you are

at teaching, if it is not learned, then you have not been successful. That is why knowing the learning styles of your children and having a variety of teaching methods is a must. We have done a lousy job. We have got teachers on our staff who have taught for over twenty years and no one has ever told them this. You can see how they are going to feel. Most of them are going to say, 'This guy is a lunatic. I have taught a certain way, and it is good enough.' No it is not good enough. It is not acceptable. I will fight them, I will fight them until the bitter end. I will fight to the last breath, because I won't give up, I am that stubborn. Eventually they will know that and maybe the ones who don't want to give in will go somewhere else, and then the majority of them will come around and do what is best for the kids. They are going to start liking it, because it feels good; smiling, you see more laughter. But yet it is still organized. It is like having a lot of little schools going on at the same time. I think little schools have a great advantage. It gives us the advantage of a having a big school with 450 kids or whatever, and yet we can break it down into sixty or ninety. That's great.

"It is so simple that it is almost scary. People say, 'That sounds too simple. That can't be right, there has got to be more to it than that.' There is more to it than that. But basically, that is what middle schools

are. They're family-oriented. It allows teachers to help other teachers, and it is okay, because you don't have to ask for help. Your team is there for you. It allows you to attack discipline problems. It allows you to attack family problems together with the group. And see, they have another family, they have got the principal and the assistant principal, because we have to come and sell them, because we want to be a part of that family, too. We are the final authority, and if it does get out of control, they know that they have somewhere else to go. Because eventually, some kids are going to have to be removed from school by being suspended or expelled or whatever. Eventually you will lose some. But once this gets going, and once your sixth-graders have been through it and once they are seventh-graders and then those who are coming into the sixth-grade hear about it, we can sell the kids. It's fun, you can learn and it may not even be painful. Because we are going to teach them however we can and put as much fun into it as possible. Team rallies are great. It is not a pep rally for athletics, it is a pep rally for your team, because your team has done well in a math test, or social studies test, or they have scored high on writing, or they have gone from twenty 'Fs' to three, there are so many ways you can celebrate. If you celebrate success, then that success becomes important."

Van and I had worked together three years ago in the summer school program at Pilot Elementary. I asked him to compare that program with the middle school concept. "The feelings are the same. The difference is in summer school I saw that all of you cared about one another, because you were a small number and banded together. If you had a problem with Boy X or Girl Y, you talked to each other about it. What is even better about middle school is that you have your own family that is set together. The good thing about it, too, is that if this family doesn't work, the principal has the power the next year to change this family. That is one of the key jobs that I have got - how I put those personalities together. That is one of my strengths, too, my strength of knowing peoples' strengths and weaknesses, many times even better that they do, and selling them on the fact. I saw a teacher here at this school who was so traditional, that the starch was in him, he was strait-laced. He has totally changed and for the better. He has taken all of those good things that made him strait-laced and a knowledgeable person and now he is teaching in a way that they are not afraid of him, he can bend. A lot of teachers have misconceptions: 'Well if anyone talks in my room while the principal is in there, he is going to think that I am bad.' I am the main one that they have to keep quiet. Because I cut up worse than the kids. I went in a

teacher's room at Flat Rock this year, in a science lab, and the kid was so excited and I was pumped up, we started high-fiving, and she high-fived, too, because she knew that it was okay. Kids watch those things. Middle school is a lot like summer school. In summer school I saw some good teachers. It was just like you. You could tell that every day, you enjoyed it, and you enjoyed being around the kids. We believed in eating! I am serious. A faculty that eats together and laughs together and cries together will grow close. We ate so much at Flat Rock this year that it about killed me, I'm telling you! We ate big time. It gives you time to sit around and get to know each other. It's more than just the eating. It's the fact that you're seeing the other side of that person. It makes you care that much more about the other person. If I care about you, I am going to try extra hard for you, but if I don't care about you, and I think you don't care about me, I'm going to slide on out of there at 3 o'clock, get in the car and wait in line to be sure that I'm out of there.

I then discussed with Van the fact that we were going to consolidate children from three different schools and communities into Pilot Mountain Middle School, those from Pilot Mountain, Shoals, and Westfield. I asked him that since this is the plan that has been adopted by the

school board, if he felt the middle school concept was the best method to bring these children together.

"It is the only way to do it. I will never know where they are from. I don't care. I could absolutely care less, because that is not ever going to be an issue. I never heard where a kid was from when this Central Middle School opened, never, I never heard where one of them was from. It is so natural that they even forget where they are from, even the teachers. They all of a sudden become Pilot Mountain Middle School, and the team thing is so good that they mix without even knowing it and it never enters their mind.

"It is so easy to change. You would think that everyone would think that this is Pilot Mountain Elementary School. It will never happen. For 99% of them that thought will never enter their mind. The way the teams are set up from Day 1 it is exciting, the whole thing. Even when they are off team in doing Career Exploration, band, chorus, or whatever, I have just never seen anything like it. I would never have believed it."

Van envisions that from the beginning the students will feel like a family at Pilot Mountain Middle School.

"What will happen the first day, when the teachers call them before they even get there, the teachers will tell them 'Okay, we're going to do Habitats. I think sixth grade is going to be an ocean habitat, seventh grade

is going to be a tropical rain forest, and maybe the eighth grade a jungle. When they come in they will have team names. Some of the teachers will already have on T-shirts that say 'Pilot Mountain Middle School Sixth-Grade Lions, Tigers', whatever. That gets in their mind. What you will see is really the Pilot Mountain Ravens become secondary. Their team becomes so important. Here [at Central Middle School] the legendary team is the Butterflies, they are famous, because they are big time. They put the heat on the rest of them. They are good. If I came to this school and I could get my kids on the Butterflies, I would get down and slip him $500.00, they are that good! It puts the heat on everybody else. The sorry stands out and the good stands out. I think that this year he will split them up some, because next year will be the fourth year and it will be time to put some new personalities together and recharge some batteries. It gives you a new focus every year. If you teach biology for ten years, you can't tell me that you don't get stale.

"I really think that from day one and every day thereafter they will forget Westfield and Pilot Mountain and Shoals. The biggest problem that I have to fight is the prom. The concept of prom stinks. All it does is say that 'this is the end.' And someone else says, 'I have already had my prom, I can go ahead and quit.' We are going to have a lot of good things for them. We are going

to have socials. At our dances we are going to have Monopoly, checkers, they can dance if they want to. You know sixth graders are strange,well they are all strange. We will have a true social, we want it to be fun. Who wants to come and stand around with your hands behind your back, and lean against the wall and watch everybody for two hours because Mama said, 'You are going to that dance! You are not going to be weird!'

"So, they can play checkers. They see me jump in there and play with them. You see, middle school principals like me, I've got to dance a little bit, I've got to make sure that they know it is important. If I do it, its important. If I just put my stamp on it and walk away from it, they are never going to believe that it is important. That's why I've got to get in the classroom. When I look at Johnny's homework and say 'Man, that is good! That is good!' and high-five, word gets around.

"Next year will be a real killer year on me. I'll have to do more. Middle school principals have a hard job. I don't care how many ball games high school principals have to go to, I don't care what the K-5 principals tell you, you can ask any middle school principal who has done all three, and I will have done all three, it is a killer, personality-wise, for a middle school person. It is really hard, because you have got to

let yourself go. You have got to give them your whole self everyday."

I then asked Van how he came to develop his thinking about the middle school. Specifically, I asked him about his professional training. "I never talked to anybody. I have never had classes on middle school. This is me. This is what I have seen happen. This is what I know will happen. I have seen it happen in a K-6 school with kindergarten kids. We have got to change the philosophy and thinking of teachers and parents and everybody, before we can do it for the kids. So, yes, this is from the heart. This is nothing I have ever [formally studied]. I don't think I have ever taken a class, I can't remember. Because a lot of middle school classes are not good. They don't tell it like it is. It depends on the professor - if they have done it and believe it and know it. We will do more things next year that are different. In the next year we will do less, because we will become more selective, because the key focus that I can never let get away from me is that we have a curriculum and we have to teach the children, those are the most important things. But I've got to shake some brick out of the mortar next year, and I've got to let them know that there are different ways that you can do things. Then we will tighten down a little bit and a little bit. Every year is a refocus. "Wayne Bozeman, I

talked to him. He is a cool guy. He is principal of Western Middle School in Burlington. They were ranked one of the top four in the country. Wayne and I talked for a long time. He believes like I do, he is weird. He said, 'We started patting ourselves on the back so much, including me. We lost focus. I told our teachers at the beginning of this year that we did a lousy job last year. If we were the fourth best middle school in this country, then this country is in trouble. Every year now we have dedicated ourselves to sitting down and looking at what we did programmatically in terms of the kids, and what can we do better? We try to pick out at least one thing every year to refocus on. It gives us a new incentive and a new goal. The worst thing that you can do is when you lose your goal and start patting yourself on the back.'

"Middle school allows that. We will look every year. We will be our own worst critics. We will not lie to parents. When we screw-up, I will say it. When I mess up, I will say it. I will have that courage. If you can do that it sets the whole tone, because everybody thinks that the schools are hiding everything. I have nothing to hide. If a teacher is sorry, I am really going to tell them. I'll try to tell them in a nice way, and I will have tried to offer them help before. I may tell one, 'I don't want you at my school anymore.' Whether it will do any good or not, I don't know, because when you deal with

higher ups, they try not to rock the boat. I believe in rocking the boat, if it needs rocking. I may lose my job for it some day, but I have reached the point that I really don't care. I am going to try to do what is right by the kids, and the heck with the rest of them. And if the adults don't like it, and the kids don't like it, and the parents don't like it, then so be it. They can find them somebody else. I am going on another boat."

I commented that one of the things that comes across in talking with Van, and was noted in the Pilot newspaper article, is that he said 'love and caring'. That is one theme that I had been listening for, and I had heard it come up again and again. I asked Van if he would say the love and caring are the keys to the middle school concept?

"They are the keys, and that is why the personality of who you have running that [is important]. Everybody can not do it. Some people don't want you to get inside of them. They don't really want you to get to know them. I don't care, I am willing to bear my soul. If I love what someone is doing I will say, 'I love what you are doing.'

We then discussed some of the other teachers that I have interviewed who expressed the importance of love also. Van said, "the only comment that I would make is that when you mention names like Vera Smith, Lena Smith,

and Roxie Payne--I've thought about this a lot as I have always tried to figure out how to make a perfect school and how to make a perfect teacher. The perfection that we had at a little old school [Westfield], the power was there in those people. One of the few that we had was mean and hateful and came across and hurt feelings, but [not] most of those people. The love that I have for reading, I believe strongly in reading. I believe that it can make a difference in this whole world. We had a little boy at Flat Rock this year who had never been any further than Winston-Salem, told Linda Tesh, our supervisor one day, who ask him why he liked to read so much. He said, 'Mrs. Tesh, I can go all over the world. I can go places that no one else can ever see, because I like to read. I like to read all kinds of books. I travel all over the world. We don't have a lot of money and don't go far.'

"I thought back about Roxie Payne and those people and the gifts that they gave me. Westfield was a small school. Westfield was unusual, I would say, in the personalities that they had gathered there. You don't find in a little small community that much power and that much love. Those people taught me how to love, and my family. I will always love them. Every time I see them I almost get cold chills, when I get around Lena and them, they just pump me up so much. I always wanted to say that

if I could do just part of that, then I have done well, too. There's no way I can say it all. So they are why I believe what I am saying.

"You can learn a lot from middle school classes. But you can take certain people and put them with the greatest professors in the world and they are not going to be middle school. I think a lot of it is heredity and how you feel about yourself and others. I think it depends on how much courage you've got to open yourself up, because people are not going to open up to you, unless you can say 'Hey, I messed up!' or 'I love that', or 'I don't like that'. If you can do that then they will open up to you and you have got a relationship that is going to be stronger than anything in this world. The power in middle school, the power in love and caring, is stronger than any book can ever give anybody. And you can do more with kids with it."

I then talked some more with Van about how he developed his theory behind middle school and he commented, "When we first started Central Middle School, [there were] a lot of the things in books, that people said that I should read."

I noted that he did make a lot of visits, and attended workshops, as we worked on the Middle Grades Task Force for over a year. "I was not on it. I was on no task force. I have never been able to figure this out. I

was never on anything. I was stuck at North Surry High School, you know, looking after North Surry, because it was about to go under," he said with a laugh. "I was fighting that. Until you live a middle school, until you can feel it, and there are a lot of people out there who know a lot about it and its easy to tell people, but until you experience it . . . It's like our staff [at Pilot Mountain Middle School]. They don't know. That is going to be a high that I am going to get, seeing them when they really feel it for the first time. Until you live a middle school, until you feel it, touch and know what is going on, you won't really understand it. Because I think that, more than anything else, more than anything written about it, you understand it when you live it. This will be the second one I have lived as far as opening. That is really quite an honor, too. It is going to be a lot of headaches, and I am probably stupid for doing it. It would be a lot easier for me to be at a K-5 school. But I've never had much sense, I'm a glutton for punishment I guess. To open the second one and to know what they are going to experience . . . The first time, I didn't know, I had to experience it for myself. I thought a lot of things, but now I know what thoughts are going through their minds, I can see it in their faces. I know what the kids are going to feel like. The fact that I know it feels so good and I know the success is going to be there,

I guess that is the main driving force. The main thing that I've got to try to remember is to try not to jump too many guns, to make sure they feel it in the right way. But it is a feeling that's good. You can go talk to people at Flat Rock this year. I told them, 'We've done a middle school, is what we have done philosophically. At lot of the things such as rewarding kids, rewarding success, doing all those things, celebrating success. The lady who was teacher of the year for that school, wrote me a little letter called 'Metamorphosis', that has touched me more than anything than had ever been written to me in my life. Because, how many times can you make a difference, in someone's life, not many. That is what reward is all about."

Fletcher Vance Dearmin III Interview: Interpretation. Alan Peshkin (1982) in The Imperfect Union wrote of his purposes: "A slice of life by its very name promises to deliver a complete picture of some segment of reality. Of course, I fail to keep this promise. Judgments are made and selections result. I cannot recover all the events of the past, and I give priority to some persons and perspectives and not to others. The result is a partial and (I hope) not too arbitrary rendering of a troubled period in the educational and community life of Unit 110 residents . . .

Selection is not an objective act; it cannot be . . . What was important for me was to tell the story that seemed most worth telling and then to explore what it means in human terms" (p. 18).

In a change from my original plan to interview six retired teachers, I decided to interview Van Dearmin only after I had asked him to speak at the final Westfield High School reunion on May 30, 1993. After listening to his remarks, I chose to talk with him (1) because of his Westfield connections. I have known him all my life for we grew up in Johnstown, the Stokes County portion of Westfield. Miss Lena, Mrs. Christian, and Aunt Vera were our teachers in Grades 1, 2, and 4 at Westfield High School. (2) He is the first principal of the new Pilot Mountain Middle School and receives Westfield students; and (3) as a principal, he might provide a valuable perspective in terms of the professionals and serve as a counterpoint to the conversations of the Westfield teachers. Because part of my interest in this study is the issue of the professional vs. the community and the conflict involved, as a school administrator Van represents the professional, and as a Westfield native, he presumably is sensitive to community concerns as reflected in this segment from the interview: "I thought back about Roxie Payne and those people and the gifts that they gave me. Westfield was a small school. Westfield was unusual,

I would say, in the personalities that they had gathered there. You don't find in a little small community that much power and that much love. Those people taught me how to love, and my family. I will always love them. Every time I see them I almost get cold chills, when I get around Lena and them, they just pump me up so much. I always wanted to say that if I could do just part of that, then I have done well, too. There's no way I can say it all. So they are why I believe what I am saying."

I thought that an interview with Van Dearmin would be valuable because he not only had a professional perspective, but he had experienced being a member of the community and then going outside its boundaries. He is also in a position to be relatively free and outspoken in his views.

Perhaps he is not a good representative of the model of a professional. Van did not speak in theoretical or pedagogical terms; he did not discuss specific curriculum issues. However, he was chosen as the first principal of the new Pilot Mountain Middle School, and perhaps that professional consciousness is still present, though modified. In contrast to the retired teachers I interviewed, he did not give an opinion on the loss of the school to Westfield nor of the gain to Pilot Mountain and its suburbs. His focus is strictly on the school itself, not its place. Nevertheless, regardless of

the differences seen by the teachers who saw the community as a school in contrast to Van's vision of the school as a community, he represents many of the same values of the other teachers. I believe that many of the values he has expressed were developed in Westfield.

The theme that Van used more than any other in his interview was that of love and caring. His professional orientation was very significantly formed by the values of the community: love, care, and personal concern. "People told me how bad Flat Rock School was. It was a lie, a flat-out lie. I don't believe that I have ever been in a place where I have felt anymore love . . . in [Pilot Mountain] summer school I saw that all of you cared about one another."

Van believes that the success of his new Pilot Mountain Middle School is predicated upon love and caring which must be felt before any other goals are met. "When they really believe that I love them, and I am bad to fall in love with teachers and students . . . in the middle school concept the word love comes up a lot. I am a loving person by nature. If I really care about someone, it is easy for me to tell them that. It is kind of shocking to a lot of them. But once they really trust you, then that is the key. If you cry together and you laugh together, and you care about each other, then it is going to be amazing as to what is going to happen . . .

The basic assumptions behind this concept are that it is okay to tell kids, teachers and other people that you love them and care about them; that you can try do the job as best you can and have the most fun possible . . . if you are teachers, or you are a basketball team, and they have to play for you out of fear, you can only reach a certain point. But if they play for you out of love, they will do whatever it takes, and you will get their whole heart and their whole soul. And that is the difference in having a great school. The greatest schools in this country have people who care about each other, from the top all the way to the bottom."

He noted that his daughter, a college freshman, remembered those teachers who cared. "We have got to teach teachers and students that it is okay to care about one another. That is what middle school is all about.

Van expressed his willingness to risk sharing his love. "The power in middle school, the power in love and caring, is stronger than any book can ever give anybody. And you can do more with kids with it . . . They are the keys, and that is why the personality of who you have running that [is important]. Everybody can not do it. Some people don't want you to get inside of them. They don't really want you to get to know them. I don't care, I am willing to bear my soul. If I love what someone is doing I will say, 'I love what you are doing."

Van has the courage to take risks for he seeks change in the schools. "We have got to change the images for what schools are like . . . We have got to change this thing around . . . It is so easy to change . . . We have got to change the philosophy and thinking of teachers and parents and everybody, before we can do it for the kids." However, he does not see the professionals as willing to take risks or change. "But I just don't know if our legislators and our government officials have enough courage to do that . . . when you deal with higher ups, they try not to rock the boat. I believe in rocking the boat, if it needs rocking . . . I am going to try to do what is right by the kids, and the heck with the rest of them . . . They can find them somebody else. I am going on another boat."

Van feels that the bureaucrats and professionals have held sway for far too long over the local schools. "I think that right now in North Carolina, the way we are [changing] testing and [implementing] the middle school concept we are starting to say that what we have done is wrong. We have not done what is right for kids, we have not done right by kids, for a long time. We have let Raleigh dictate what goes on and we have not asked the people here . . . ."

He believes that the local school should be more empowered. "I guarantee you that I can take people from

Central Middle School, Pilot Middle School . . . who have been there and do a better job than anyone in Raleigh has ever thought about doing because we know what is going on. We are there, we feel the pulse, the heart every day."

Van is very interested in the personal well-being and personal concerns of his students and staff. Van implies that his interest in others came from his early background at Westfield. "The reason that I am a better person in this world is that I grew up around all kinds of people."

In the interview I heard many values such as the importance of personal relationships that resonate with the six women, but some concepts that he discussed were different, for example his notion of success. "The fact that I know it feels so good and I know the success is going to be there, I guess that is the main driving force . . . Middle school is not necessarily traditional. Everybody cannot work in a middle school and be successful, [but] we have got to find ways to allow children to be successful. If you find enough ways to allow teachers and students to be successful, they will be. If you invite success, the chances are that you are going to have some type of success. It may not be as much as you want, but you will win some battles. If you set it up to be nonsuccessful, it won't happen.

One of the primary "middle school concepts [is] inviting success. We did some things over there [Flat Rock] this year . . . such as rewarding kids, rewarding success, doing all those things, celebrating success . . . If you celebrate success, then that success becomes important . . . We celebrated success. In this country we have taken success for granted. Students and teachers want you to celebrate success. I am the same way. All of us are."

Van stated that "the key focus that I can never let get away from me is that we have a curriculum and we have to teach the children, those are the most important things." Most of Van's conversation was used in discussing his concern with the students which can be summed up in his statement, "School is for children, not for the adults. Teachers are hired to serve the children." His first priority at the new middle school will be the children. He spoke of "winning them over", concern for the at-risk child, and the importance of cooperative learning.

Van summarized the benefits of the middle school concept by noting that "I see benefits for the kids from the fact that you set up a network that is looking for everything positive and it becomes contagious . . . So not only is it good for the child, in giving the child a family-like atmosphere, but in giving him advocates,

people who care about him. In a school of four hundred or five hundred or six hundred kids, a lot of kids get lost. We particularly say this in high school. I remember at North Surry, when we had about 1500 kids in the early '70s. I saw kids go across the stage [at graduation] that I had never seen. We lose a lot of those kids.

For implementing such concepts as cooperative learning and networking, Van advocated in a "family-like" atmosphere for the children and the team-teaching notion for the children are all intertwined in his broader concept of the school as family. This notion is quite close to the concept of school as community as expressed by the six retired teachers.

"The reason I think that this is so important at this time in our country is because my wife had a child in her room the other day who was disappointed because he didn't have a stepfather or stepmother and everyone else did have stepbrothers or stepsisters. We have reached a time where the family has more or less, in a lot of ways, disappeared in this country. I still think that kids want a family. I think that the school family can in some way take that place, that is what happens in middle schools." He equated this notion with "the concepts of love, and the concepts of family, and the concepts of caring for each other, the power that is unleashed is unbelievable."

He also suggested that more males be employed as teachers, as substitute fathers, acting as role models. This comment was also made by Mrs. Lowe specifically and is also related to the notion that the school, as community, consists of community people. "That is why good middle school teams have got to have males . . . And that is why we need more males, not only in middle schools, but in K-5 schools or whatever. I think that the main reason I made a difference at Flat Rock was that I was a male and we had a whole bunch of women there. But yet I gave them that other perspective.

Van sees the school as family not only for the students, but for the faculty as well, perhaps with himself as the patriarch. That is why we will try to set up a couple of family nights where the team comes and they may have refreshments and play ball together . . . The family benefits. It is so natural that they even forget where they are from, even the teachers. Then all of a sudden they become Pilot Mountain Middle School, and the team thing is so good that they mix without even knowing it and it never enters their mind . . . . A team becomes almost like a family . . . But basically, that is what middle schools are. They're family-oriented. It allows teachers to help other teachers, and it is okay, because you don't have to ask for help. Your team is there for you. It allows you to attack discipline problems. It

allows you to attack family problems together with the group. And see, they have another family, they have got the principal and the assistant principal, because we have to come and sell them, because we want to be a part of that family, too . . . A lot of times the principal does meet with the whole team, it is a family affair . . . What is even better about middle school is that you have your own family that is set together. The good thing about it, too, is that if this family doesn't work, the principal has the power the next year to change this family. That is one of the key jobs that I have got - how I put those personalities together."

Van also spoke of his notion of a family relationship among the faculty which would enhance a feeling of closeness. "A faculty that eats together and laughs together and cries together will grow close . . . Its the fact that you're seeing the other side of that person. It makes you care that more about the other person. If I care about you, I am going to try extra hard for you, but if I don't care about you, and I think you don't care about me, I'm going to slide on out of there at 3 o'clock, get in the car and wait in line to be sure that I'm out of there."

Van spoke more as a professional administrator when he talked about teachers and teaching. Again, he used his personal experiences. "I remember the teachers that I

have had who people said were good. They were not good. They were good for the top people. But for people who did not have an aptitude for that particular subject, or whatever, they were not good. They did more damage. I remember the teachers who damaged me and it will be hard for me to ever forgive them. At the time I thought that it was my fault. But it was not all my fault . . . If a teacher is sorry, I am really going to tell them. I'll try to tell them in a nice way, and I will have tried to offer them help before . . . They are going to have to develop new teaching methods . . . They are going to watch everything I do . . . in handling teachers who do poor performance. So I've got to go in there and I've got to make some examples and I have got to pick my spots. I can't be unfair, I can't harass people, because I really do believe this, although in the bottom of my heart I know it is unlikely, all our teachers will perform next year. Probably a couple won't. But then I have got to try to do the best I can to win them over, a least the majority of the staff, and then we are ready to go."

He recognizes that his leadership is crucial, and that part of his responsibility must be shared. "In the middle school I am going to open next year, I've got nobody but me. It is really going to be tough . . . The lead teachers at my school next year at Pilot Mountain have no idea what they are going to do. That is why the

key is getting people who are lead teachers. You can take a couple of teachers who are average. I saw some people who came out who had never come out in their lives before. They will never go back."

Van recognizes that most teachers do seek to meet the needs of their students. "We have got schools that are doing a heck of a job and teachers bursting their rear ends everyday . . . " and he uses the commercial slogan "piece of the rock" several times as a metaphor to express the notion of buying into the school. While Van clearly sees the school as family, he also implies that he sees the school as a community. This is in contrast to the other ladies who saw the community as a school. "All of that feeds over into the community. The community benefits because they see those things going on. The family benefits. It all ties into one package."

Although Pilot Mountain Middle School is located one block off Main Street, he never mentions the town. In some ways his story is a continuation of the values of caring, love, compassion, and personal attention that he received from Westfield. Although the values are retained, he is working in a different context. His point of reference is not the town, but the school. He wants the school to be a kind of Westfield which may be defined as the physical boundaries of the community or as its culture. So he has made the transition and perhaps he has

been able to do it more easily because of his professional orientation. His first commitment is to the welfare of the students, not to the town.

". . . I am going to make a decision that is based not on whether they are black, white, red, poor, rich, Westfield or Pilot, those thoughts will never enter my mind. To me a child is a child. The kids will see that . . . I will never know where they are from. I don't care. I could [not] absolutely care less, because that is not ever going to be an issue. I never heard where a kid was from when this Central Middle School opened, never. It is so natural that they even forget where they are from, even the teachers. They all of a sudden become Pilot Mountain Middle School, and the team thing is so good that they mix without even knowing it and it never enters their mind . . . It is so easy to change. You would think that everyone would think that this is Pilot Mountain Elementary School. It will never happen. For 99% of them that thought will never enter their mind . . . I really think that from day one and every day thereafter they will forget Westfield and Pilot Mountain and Shoals.

However, I don't think that Van will ever forget Westfield. He has transported the culture of Westfield, the attitudes, beliefs,values, loyalties, and personalism to the Pilot Mountain Middle School. "The only comment that I would make is that when you mention names like Vera

Smith, Lena Smith, and Roxie Payne--I've thought about this a lot as I have always tried to figure out how to make a perfect school and how to make a perfect teacher. The perfection that we had at a little old school, the power was there in those people."

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: A COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

In his attempt to analyze the forces at work in the communities of his study, Peshkin (1982) looked at the community in the light of seven key concepts: boundaries, integrity, the community school, consolidation and centralization, loss and secession. I have looked at each of the conversations of the teachers interviewed in terms of the first six concepts for secession was not a factor in Westfield. Now that the individual interviews have been discussed, perhaps it would be worthwhile to discuss them as an aggregate, a summary of the conversations. While I have found Peshkin's categories useful and still applicable, I have also identified several subcategories within some of his key concepts which I will discuss, as well as a new concept, that of place.

Peshkin recognized physical, political or formal boundaries in a community as well as those informal ones such as those relating to shopping or medical facilities. He noted distinctions between the communities in his study in terms of their (a) socioeconomics, (b) leadership structure, (c) religion, and (d) ethnicity. Although

Peshkin did not elaborate upon these distinctions within the communities he studied, I would like to so here and add the following sub-categories: (e) "other," (f) transients, (g) gender, and (h) boundaries within Boundaries.

Boundaries

Socioeconomic

Socioeconomic class differences were identified many times in the interviews, e.g., in the remarks made by Mrs. McIntyre and Miss Lena in speaking of the new transients in the trailer park in Westfield. Identifying these newcomers as outsiders raises the possibilities that these teachers see themselves as members of the socially elite of the Westfield Community. All those interviewed enjoy the respect of the community and thus have a vested interest in seeing the community maintained. All of them are steeped in the history and the traditions of the community and they have many personal relationships with members of the community. All are white, except for Mrs. Lowe whose professional attributes have allowed her to be accepted in the educational realm. Mrs. Lowe herself might be seen as the among the elite of the black community.

Political Boundaries

Democratic/Republican

Political issues were mentioned occasionally by the teachers, but these did not seem very powerful or as significant as other boundaries to the community. Political boundaries were discussed in issues such as the Westfield Post Office and postmaster position by Miss Lena. Republican and Democratic identifications were made by Mrs. Jessup, especially contrasting the Democratic county seat with Republican Westfield. Mrs. Christian mentioned the differing personalities in the Democratic and Republican parties, but noted a common unity in the desire for the best interests of the school.

Stokes/Surry

Aunt Vera was the only teacher who was politically active and only at times to protect her son and grandchildren in the Stokes/Surry issue. All of those interviewed tended to put more emphasis on physical distances than on educational issues as critical for the Stokes students to remain at Westfield School. All of the teachers felt that students should attend the school nearest their homes. As residents of Stokes County, Mrs. Christian, Aunt Vera, and Mrs. McIntyre were more personally affected by the issue. Perhaps Mrs. McIntyre best summed up the issue for the teachers as well as many

other community residents when she said of the Stokes officials, "They're not thinking of the children now. They are thinking about the allotment that they get from the state." Her comments also reflected her recognition of the differences between educators and bureaucrats. Miss Lena noted that moving the community school was "something that is for the state instead of the community."

Religion

The church is seen as a part of the larger boundary by the rest of the teachers, who see their church, family, and school as integral parts of their lives and of the community; the church comprises a boundary. The integration of the church and the community implies a tolerance and understanding as well as unity which probably does not exist today. For most of the history of the community its members worshiped at Westfield Friends, Westfield Baptist, and Toms Creek Primitive Baptist on alternate Sundays. In 1956, Westfield Baptist called it first full-time pastor and the Westfield Friends did also soon after. . The community members then began to attend the church of their membership only and less frequently visited other community churches. Members of the black community attended Locust Grove Primitive Baptist Church in the "Johnstown" section of Stokes County from which

Mrs. Lowe's mother led members to form Chestnut Ridge Progressive Primitive Baptist Church. Both of these churches continue to serve the black community today.

Race

Boundaries can been seen as walls to restrict, confine, or keep others out. The boundary of integration in terms of race was not discussed by the five white teachers, and by its omission, it therefore becomes important for that which is left unsaid can be as important as that which is spoken. In speaking of the integration of Ridge-Westfield and Westfield in 1966, Mrs. Lowe, the only black teacher noted, "I just went in there like every other person, and that is the way they treated me, the whole community. I had very little difficulty with any of the parents . . . . I was the only black teacher there. There was never any discrimination against me in anyway . . . But I can truthfully say that when I went to Westfield I didn't lose anything. I gained a lot of friends. I wouldn't have wanted to have been treated any better. I went there to work and gain because that was my job."

However, in terms of the loss of identity for the students, she noted, "It probably happened to some of the [black] kids." Also the black parents did not participate in school functions at Westfield as they had at

Ridge-Westfield. "They didn't come to see about their children or to see what they were doing. Only a few of the parents came to see about their kids. Those were probably those whose kids started out as first-graders at Westfield. But those who had children up at Ridge-Westfield School never really felt they were a part of the school. They felt as though they were outsiders."

Others

Peshkin noted that in being alerted to boundaries, he recognized the sentiments of persons within them toward outsiders. I have classified this concept as "others" for not only have the teachers identified specifically those outside the community who have been problematic for the community, such as the Stokes County officials, but they have also spoken of nonspecific "others" in terms of school reorganization, those whom they have perceived as having an effect on the status quo. The concept of those outside the community or "others" is addressed by all of the teachers. Mrs. Lowe sees the moving of the school as a cause for the community to "lose interest in some of its meetings, but there are other communities involved [now]." The concept is also addressed in terms of an unidentified, undefined "others". Miss Lena also speaks to the concept of "other" in addressing the moving of the school. Without any specifics she believes that "somebody over in

the Cook settlement [Cook's School Community/South Westfield Township] had more [influence]. They are the ones that got the school moved. There was always a school over there, a small one . . . There was something between this area [North Westfield Township] and where they are putting it [South Westfield Township]." Aunt Vera was concerned with the "others" who might have had contact with her son or grandchildren traveling long distances into Stokes County. Mrs. Jessup felt that the community had been "double-crossed" by those who would seek to have the school moved for political reasons or questionable educational benefits.

Transients

Another category not identified by Peshkin, but vital to the discussion of the boundaries of the Westfield Community is that of "transients," particularly those residing in one trailer park. Mrs. McIntyre recognized years ago the effects that new members of a community could have upon older established communities and their schools, especially those schools that have traditionally had strong community support. She told her superintendent that Westfield had "those trailers coming in. So far they have held up [the community standards], but sooner or later it is going to happen, they won't have that sturdy community that they used to have . . ." Noting the

importance of personal relationships she continued, "You see, I knew the people . . . This sounds a little bad, because not all the children in the trailer parks are poor, but we've had a lot of that at Westfield . . . They are coming from West Virginia because we pay more social [benefits]." Miss Lena is cognizant of the fact that some new people are moving into the community and have changed the character of Westfield. These have been largely transients from West Virginia seeking employment. "There is a new group of people in here. I don't know them that well, I've not been active. They just found out what a good place Westfield was. There are several people, I understand, who have moved in over at Bailey's Trailer Park, because it is the only place they could find to live," and noting the lack of personal relationships, "but I don't know any of them." She notes that because the school is leaving the community its residents "feel that somebody let them down."

Gender

Another issue not identified by Peshkin, but discussed by the teachers interviewed for this study was that of gender. These was discussed especially in terms of occupational issues and by Mrs. McIntyre as a child and young woman. In her life, whenever Mrs. McIntyre has recognized such obstacles, it has been her policy to use

her own resources and initiative to knock down or go around the hurdle. She noted that the family car was "only for the boys." Although discouraged by her father from attending college, she worked at a textile mill and at school to provide her own financial resources. Mrs. Christian noted that her father bought a car for the boys and a piano for the girls. Miss Lena as a child wanted to be a nurse, like her mother, until she started school and then decided to become a teacher. This represents the limited choices that many of these teachers had in deciding their professions. They were generally limited to the professions of teaching and nursing. Miss Lena, as a married woman, was unable to teach in South Carolina public schools and went to work in a private school for training secretaries.

Boundaries Within Boundaries

Some boundaries within boundaries were also uncovered in these conversations. Mrs. Lowe even felt some discrimination from her own black community when she returned from college while Miss Lena recognized the boundaries of Methodist and Baptist cultures within the Protestant Church.

Integrity

The wholeness of the Westfield Community can be identified not only directly from the teachers' conversations, but also in terms of the importance they place upon integral issues when they were threatened by forces outside the community. Because these teachers recognize the boundaries of the community, their sense of integrity is alert and sensitive to change. Their individual integrity is also reflected in the collective integrity of the community. These teachers, particularly Aunt Vera, can act alone or with other members of the community to defend against outside threats. The integrity of these teachers is also reflected in their shared experiences and understandings. They seem to have a shared cognitive map of the community.

Family, Churches, School

Because boundaries define integrity, these two concepts are intertwined. All of the teachers see their families, churches, and schools as integral parts of their lives. Only Miss Lena does not identify the church as strongly as the others. Mrs. Lowe spoke for the others as she described the family, the school, and the church as joint partners in building good citizens. These three institutions are central not only to her personal

integrity, but, as she perceives them, central to the community as well. Without any one of these, the community is incomplete, as are the lives of these teachers.

Community History, Traditions, and Personal Relationships

All of these teachers have a great knowledge of community history and its traditions. The Quaker heritage was specifically discussed by both Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Christian. The history of the school and community were discussed by each of the teachers, especially in personal terms. All of the teachers identified personal relationships as vitally important to their lives. They tended to identify individuals by name and discuss issues more concretely than abstractly. They focused on social, family and professional relationships rather than theoretical social or educational matters. Their conversations are permeated with familiarity and intimacy.

For Mrs. Jessup and Aunt Vera issues concerning their sons were of greatest importance to their integrity. Aunt Vera felt that the integrity of her family, school, and community had been impugned by the Surry/Stokes dispute. Her immediate concern was for her son's welfare. Aunt Vera's reaction to oppose this attack on the integrity and unity of her family, school, and community

exemplifies the existence of this integrity. Mrs. Jessup spoke with the greatest intensity about the problems she had with a former principal and her son. Although she exerted her personal control in transferring her son, she still was unable to come to terms with the principal and allow her son to remain at Westfield. Mrs. McIntyre spoke on several instances of using her personal persuasion in dealing with state and federal officials. Her initiative and influence have helped her not only in professional affairs, but in family matters as well.

The Community School

Peshkin noted that the concept of the community school connotes different meanings to different people. Not only are the obvious academic concerns important, but also its operational and symbolic functions make the community school important not only to the communities of Peshkin's study and the Westfield Community, but to all other schools.

Operational Functions

These teachers see the school and the community as one and view the school more as community, rather than of the community. Mrs. Lowe sees local schools as the foundation which serves to build good citizens for the county, state and nation. Her comments reflect the

beliefs of the other teachers that schools exist to serve the community.

Local Teachers. All of these teachers have lived and taught in the Westfield community for most of their lives; therefore it is not surprising that all of them speak of the importance of local teachers. Mrs. Jessup spoke of coming to "know" the students and the community, and the importance of personal relationships. Mrs. Lowe commented, "A local teacher will do more good that one you bring in from the outside, because he or she is interested in everything that takes place in the community, because he or she is trying to build a better place to live."

Local Control. All of the teachers believe that the local school had more control over its own affairs when they began teaching in the thirties than it does at the present. All of these teachers were originally hired by local school committees rather than county school boards. Although local committees have persisted they exist in name only as county school boards now have ultimate control. Mrs. McIntyre noted that "they're figureheads now. Therefore, the importance of the school itself, both operationally and physically, tends to give a commonality of importance to its residents.

Symbolic Functions

Peshkin does not define a school's symbolic functions, but discusses them under such subcategories as community autonomy, community vitality, personal and community identity and traditions. I would like to add to these the symbolic functions of Westfield School in terms of ownership and community values. The school building itself has meaning for these teachers apart from its functions as a community school. Its place is integral to the community. It is identified as a "landmark" by Mrs. Lowe and intimately identified by the others as being a part of their lives. Symbolically, it evokes memories and represents a continuity of the life of the community itself.

Ownership. The teachers tended to feel a strong sense of ownership in Westfield School, while Mrs. Lowe felt more ownership in Ridge-Westfield. They spoke with pride of Westfield School and its operational functions. Mrs. Payne sighed, "I will never again be able to look out and say, 'that is my Westfield School'." Aunt Vera and Mrs. McIntyre refer to it as "our school."

Community Values. Aunt Vera doubted that the new school could match the love and care of the students that they had experienced at the old Westfield. To her and the others this love and care supersedes any educational advantages that might be gained at the new school. To

her, the school was not just a building, but a living entity, with children and activities throughout the school year which will no longer be experienced by the community. These teachers are actually uninformed and somewhat ambivalent about the prospects for the new Pilot Mountain Middle School. To them, the important issue is not strictly educational concerns but the continuity of passing on to the students the community traditions and values. The fact that most of them taught for so many years in the building is one of the factors, along with parental involvement and local input, - these among others point to the operational functions of the school which tend to reinforce the mores and traditions of the community itself. Mrs. Christian's ancestors, family, and her own long association with Westfield School cause her to see it as the community's most central organization, one which exists as a focus upon which all the community centers.

Personal Identity. The school building represents part of the identity of the teachers, particularly Aunt Vera and Mrs. Christian. To Aunt Vera, the school was not just a building, but a living entity, with children and activities throughout the school year which will no longer be experienced by the community. The building itself is a place Mrs. Christian has identified herself as being from for sixty years.

This building represents not only her early education, but also her entire teaching career. Her loyalty, devotion, and duty to the education of the community youth and service to the community itself are symbolized by that structure. All of the teachers recognized the very poor physical conditions of Westfield School and contrasted this with the modern new school. The poor conditions of the Westfield School and the original Ridge-Westfield School are quite remarkable, even for the times in which they existed. Mrs. Lowe was able to see a new modern facility built at Ridge-Westfield which was closed due to racial integration but was a physical facility superior to the Westfield School. She noted that to the black community, Ridge-Westfield "was a source of pride for them."

Community Vitality. Mrs. Lowe also spoke of the meaning of the school to the Westfield community and reinforced her concept of the school as community. Westfield School "was a landmark and that is something that the people of the community just looked forward to. I don't believe they will continue to have the closeness that they had with each other. That was their center. The center of their meetings and everything that they desired to do centered around that school. This is almost like setting up a new community, that is the way I feel about it." Several of the teachers noted the importance

of the physical plant and the campus to the vitality of the community. Aunt Vera's fears that "if they don't put something back in its place up there for the community to be involved in, I think that we won't even realize that it is the same community" points to the issue of community vitality. She recognizes that the life of the community has been largely reflected in its school and without that institution, the community will change inexorably. Mrs. Christian is unsure as to the future changes that will be brought, but suggests that if the buildings on the campus can be put to use as meeting places or recreational facilities, Westfield will continue to be viable. Mrs. Jessup noted the effect on the community "would depend on the buildings. I don't know what uses will be made of the buildings. Good uses could be made of them, that could help the community, but we don't know what will happen to the buildings. We'll have to find out what happens to the buildings. I would like to see something that would bring the whole community together, to work together. I don't know what that would be. But the buildings are there and it will help the community, but not as much as the school would help." Mrs. Christian also is unsure of the changes yet to come to the community as the result of losing the school, but suggests that if the buildings can be put to use as a meeting place, or used for recreational facilities, Westfield will continue to be viable.

Community Autonomy. The Stokes/Surry dispute of 1972 represented the largest effort of parents to defend their integrity, and no such organized effort to defeat the middle school plan which included the closing of the Westfield School in 1993 was ever organized.

The issue of community autonomy was referred to by the teachers in several areas including the importance of local teachers, local control, and the moving of the school. Mrs. Lowe believed that the local citizens felt they had a greater control of Ridge-Westfield School in earlier years. "It caused their interest to be higher. I think there should be a lot of local control in the community." Mrs. Lowe sees local control as being the basis upon which good schools are built and strongly feels that it is important for a teacher to live and teach in the same community. "If you are going to be a good citizen, you have to have an interest in the community in which they are living. They [citizens] have got to be interested in you. She believes that communities are losing control of their own destinies. "Someone has taken control of their communities and the citizens have decided to let them run it, and nobody is running anything."

In our discussion of the influence of state and national professionals upon the schools, Mrs. McIntyre noted that when she began teaching these did not have as much control over the schools as they do now. When I

became a supervisor, the state and federal government were really pinning down." The location of Westfield on the county line was also noted by Mrs. Christian as one reason that, in her early years of teaching, there was little contact with the central office in Dobson. The decision to follow the middle school concept was made by the superintendent and the Surry County Board of Education. The vote was defeated in the North Westfield Precinct, but carried county-wide, thus emphasizing the lack of community autonomy.

Loss

I have combined Peshkin's concepts of consolidation and centralization with the final concept of loss because the loss of the school was precipitated by the school reorganization. The concept of loss as a result of the school reorganization was addressed by all of the teachers and generally in very personal terms. Mrs. Lowe's statements concerning the close of Ridge-Westfield School emphasize social loss. "It was sad. It was a sad time, because we realized that we were losing something. We would probably be losing our culture and our identity and everything. We would not be able to have as big a say in our school as we had been having over our kids . . . Closing a school down like that is almost like losing a member of the family because it has become so close to the

people. That [Westfield] is the second school I have lost."

The metaphor of "losing a member of the family" was also reiterated quite dramatically by Aunt Vera in her a cry of disbelief, "Say it isn't so!" which is often the first reaction that is experienced upon the death of a loved one. In her statement she noted the school had been a center for community activities as well as the closeness of the students and parents in the community with the school. She further noted the loss of Westfield High School in 1961 as grades 9-12 were consolidated at East Surry High School and the accompanying changes in parental involvement with two centers of interest. Unlike more tangible factors such as possible loss of property values and distances to be traveled, her anguish reflected a more personal connection. In her prepared statement, she indicated no sense of anger or plan of action as she had in the Stokes County situation of 1972. Her statement reflected her resignation of the fact that the school had died as her voice cracked and she tried to hold back the tears: "There comes a time when we must decide to let go and turn the reins over to new and hopefully better days. I wish them the best, but I'll always miss our old Westfield School."

Like Aunt Vera, Mrs. Christian also believes that it is futile to live in the past for change is inevitable.

Her resignation and acceptance of the fact of the loss reflects not only the passing of a community school, but also a way of life. Miss Lena noted that she was going to miss seeing the children. Mrs. Jessup commented "I don't feel very good about it. I want Westfield School left where it is . . . The ones who have gone to Westfield School, who graduated there, aren't going to feel good about it, either."

These stories about the loss of Westfield School are discussed in terms of tragedy, in the context of mourning. The ritual of the final Westfield High School Alumni Reunion also coincided with the effect of moving to a new school and in essence provided a closure. Something was buried there, above and beyond the school building. It represents a symbolic representation of something that started to end a long time ago, which is the death of the notion of the community school. These teachers are senior citizens and as such, they represent another era. One of the powerful notions that comes across in these conversations is the intimacy involved. The story of the principal coming to visit the Mrs. McIntyre's classroom to learn from her, or Mr. Hauser visiting Mrs. Christian at a junior college and then escorting her to Guilford College would not happen anymore. The rare visits from the central office that were once typical represent a

significant change. The personal connections have been replaced by a growing sense of professional detachments.

Change

The stories that these teachers have told is one of change. Much of their conversation is in the past. The concept of community,one in which the family, school, church, and other institutions such as the volunteer fire department are all integrated is gone. The new Westfield School aside from being outside the Westfield community will be a new version of the old school. Even if the community comes to adopt the new school as an extension of itself, a new version of the Westfield community will exist. The present educational community is profoundly different from the educational community of the past.

There is a way in which many of these teachers say that and accept it. Mrs. McIntyre hopes that "maybe the conveniences and being in a super building will help . . . we did a good job in spite of buildings and a lack of things . . . we couldn't provide . . . I suppose that will make up for the loss." Perhaps there is something here that has to be dead and buried that Aunt Vera and Mrs. Christian mourn? There is a certain fatalism in their conversations. They seem to be saying collectively one theme, "That's over with, it was nice while it lasted, but we've got to get on with it." The fact that the school is

being moved out of the community also reflects that the world has changed, profoundly. This could not have happened in 1929 when the building was built. The fact that it happened now is predicated upon the changing conditions. The social and cultural setting has profoundly changed and allowed this to happen. The demographics of the community have changed. Westfield has largely remained stagnant in its membership, aside from the trailer parks.

The teachers suggested that the trailer park had changed the community, but its not that the community has changed, that the trailer park has become an integral part of the community. It is not a fact that Westfield is now altered by the trailer park. The people in the trailer park might say that the people in Westfield have changed the trailer park citizen's community. In other words, the community has fundamentally changed, it has profoundly changed. That helps to explain why the school was able to move. I read into these interviews the fact that at some level, these teachers have sensed that their time has passed. There is a certain consciousness here, a certain way of thinking: if it's not gone it's going. Most of the residents are becoming older and live on small ancestral farms, but work elsewhere. Very few of the residents now farm. Transportation improvements such as the four-lane U.S. 52 at Pilot Mountain, allow residents to commute to

Winston-Salem in about thirty-minutes. Interstate 77 is about twenty-five miles away in Dobson. Since there are no opportunities for employment in the community, the youth seldom return to live in Westfield. Those that do often work in Mount Airy or Winston-Salem. If the notion of the school being intimately integrated into the community, is not dead, then it is very close.

The preservation of the community, in this case Westfield, as opposed to the good of the students is a perennial question. The teachers say that the new school is for the good of the students, but they recognize the detriment to the community in the loss of the school. They are resigned to the loss and are trying to come to terms with it. In essence they are trying to make the best of a bad situation, and their sadness is reflected in their stories. This is not the same time as years ago when the Stokes residents rose to oppose their children being taken from the school. Now there seems to be a feeling of inevitability, passivity, and acceptance.

Even Mrs. McIntyre, the retired supervisor, was unclear as to all of the ramifications of the middle school concept. But what she has learned was that there are such things as experts and that we have to meet the needs of our children. These teachers may perceive themselves as elderly and old-fashioned, so therefore they have to give way to new and bright and shining ideas.

These teachers are citizens who are basically, law-biding, polite, and respectful, who do not think in terms of burning down a building or shaking their fist in the face of the superintendent. They were acculturated to believe that maybe it is better for the students to go to a new school outside the community because it is more modern. Therefore, it would seem that loyalty and identification to the community are not as important as they once were.

That the bond referendum which financed the school reorganization was defeated in the North Westfield Precinct, reflects a new political reality. The issue of the moving of the school is not as strong as it once was for as many people. This was not a fait accompli twenty years ago; there has been change. The fact that the superintendent who spearheaded this reorganization was hired from outside the county also reflects a change for the community. The new superintendent was admittedly clever and resourceful to get the bond referendum manipulated through, but on the other hand he fought for change and was able to push it through. The resistance to it was very weak. However, since just a few years ago, people might have thought of a means to keep the school on the present campus, so the issue would seem to be more complex than just a different personality in the superintendent's office. The political constituency had changed, the consciousness had changed. One of the things

that may have contributed to it, apart from Westfield, apart from Surry County, are invisible forces. The current national issues about improving the schools, the discourse about American students being inferior to others, the debates concerning individual kids getting a chance are couched in a language that has no discussion about the importance of sustaining the community or about the relationship between the school and the community. So concerns for these issues are eroded.

This represents a matter of change in the entire culture, which permeate the community. So teachers and citizens like those in Westfield were overwhelmed, because this was another kind of thinking, another kind of language; one of individual students, up-to-date methods.

Place

The concept of place was developed late in my study, for it came only after listening to the conversations and noting the recurrence of the theme of the close identification with Westfield. I found Kinchloe and Pinar's (1991) Curriculum as Social Psychoanalyis: The Significance of Place as a valuable resource to give language to this concept. I have come to find that this concept in also applicable in a very special way to the minds of Southerners.

> Place is both figure and ground, source, and destination. It is simultaneously a given and a construction, a beginning point and a mediation. (Edgerton, 1991, p. 96)

Place includes the shared lives of the people of a region that gives meaning to them in terms of their historical, cultural, educational, and religious beliefs. Southerners tend to see themselves as free will agents. Most of the teachers in this study are Baptists who view their church as an autonomous body unencumbered by the positions of bishops or other hierarchy found in other Protestant denominations. The belief in the priesthood of the believer teaches that an individual may communicate with God without the intervention of a priest or pastor. This belief encourages the individual to be wary of all outside forces, and especially those which tend to impose from the upper realms of a hierarchy whether it be religious, political, or educational. Therefore, they see themselves as the leaders of their own churches and are not necessarily influenced by the Southern Baptist Convention, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, or even neighboring churches in the Surry Baptist Association. Because they are responsible for their own actions in their individual churches, they are not predisposed to view outside influences in the areas of their religion with favor and this theological tradition is also extended to their political and educational views.

This orientation tends to produce conservative political views based upon the concrete of their daily lives rather than an abstract political theory.

> The South is a place where people cherish the importance of friendships that exist in reality, not in the effort - as in a Dale Carnegie 'relationship' . . . You shared certain things: a reverence for informality, an interest in what other friends were doing, a regard for geographic places, an awareness of a certain set of beloved landmarks in them-selves important to one's mutual but usually unexpressed sense of community. (Morris, 1967, p. 146)

This individualistic view also tends to look for specific details in society and its members, rather than to seek commonalities among individuals or other communities. One's own community is viewed as unique with characteristics not shared by other nearby communities. This view tends to bind one emotionally to one's place, to the exclusion of all "others."

These teachers seem to have, like many Southerners, a keen sense of history, especially local history, that is seen to be unique to Westfield. This sense of historical place is further entwined with the concrete and familiar of their personal stories, their families, their church, and their community. These institutions provide integrity for these teachers, and the outside world is viewed in terms of these three.

These teachers are only one generation away from yeoman farmers and still feel a close attachment to the land. Each of them can identify and relate to their places of birth and their current homes through the generations of those who tilled the land. Because the families have lived in this area for four or five generations, their associations with their neighbors in the context of their land and place is quite intimate. Having one's own place, not just for the sake of ownership, but in terms of a sense of belonging, is vital to these teachers. Perhaps the loss of the school raises the specter of not only the loss of an institution, but the fear that outside forces might seek to displace them. Being without a place is to be without an identity.

The notion of place, a private domain such as the family, can extend beyond these boundaries into areas that are normally considered public. Therefore, the teachers see Westfield School as their own, for they have invested their lives in laboring to nurture it, to see its growth. For the school board to decide to move the school exemplifies their view that their own place has been invaded by outsiders and a decision has been made for them by these "others." In this situation, as in the Stokes County issue, the school board members are viewed as mere bureaucrats who make decisions outside the community in

legalistic intricacies without personal confrontation with the community.

Conversely, one must recognize that this sense of place, this individualistic free-will, this pride in localism, may be only romantic and that such views can also be provincial. In terms of the previously discussed concepts of "other," transients, and race, members of these groups are excluded from the place. This situation might be described at "placelessness." Having a place, being from a place is very important to most Southerners who often greet strangers after learning their names by asking, "Where are you from?" By the same token, those in the South are wary of those who do not seem to have a place, in the case of transients, for example.

Both Mrs. Christian and Miss Lena are limited in the space of their place by the fact that they do not drive automobiles. However, Mrs. Christian, having been born and lived all her life in the community, identifies much more closely to Westfield and speaks of the pride of place. Having lived all her life within approximately one mile of her birthplace, Mrs. Christian epitomizes the community school teacher.

In terms of place, the concept of scale is also important to her connections. In order to maintain close personal relationships,one's place in relationship to others and to institutions must be relatively small. The

connection between personal relationships and the scale of place is also reflected in the revelation of her shyness. In a larger world, a larger place, this shyness would be more evident. Her early fears of being away from home and speaking in front of groups reflect this shyness. Her place is a relatively small world with intimate relationships. Having never learned to drive a car has also limited her scale of space. Therefore, her world has been limited to the area to which she could walk and the people whom she knew. This is in contrast to the professional, bureaucratic notion that regardless of the place or space involved, educational issues have a commonality that can be discussed by all educators. In summary, Mrs. Christian's world is fairly constant, relatively small, and based on personal relationships. Her world is shaped by her space, its scale and intimacy. Nor does her concept of place differentiate between the community, school and church, both of which have played significant roles in Mrs. Christian's life.

Her very powerful intergenerational theme indicates the importance of not only place, but also of time. The concept of "time takes place" is applicable for throughout her comments real time is measured from generation to generation in terms of place. Mrs. Lena Smith's comments about families such as the Paynes and Smiths serving as teachers over several generations at Westfield School also

reflect the notion of time taking place. This span of service has given a predictability to the community.

However, Stokes County is not her place in terms of identity and reference. Mrs. Christian's comments about not really feeling apart of Stokes County, although she has lived there all her life, indicate the ambivalence many Westfield residents feel. Having walked to Westfield School in Surry County, and even coming home for lunch, and always living in sight of the school, Mrs. Christian seems perplexed that a county line would disallow students from attending a school if they live within sight of it. Her concern with the problems of distances to the Stokes County schools, and is indicative of her perception of the scale of her place. The building is a place with which Mrs. Christian has identified herself as being from, beginning at the age of five until the age of sixty. Her life has largely been one of personal interaction. Such personal intervention is enabled by a small community, and life that is on a manageably small scale.

I learned that even someone of her personal character and reputation could imply that she feared being more outspoken for fear of some reprisal from unidentified others. Perhaps this is due to her shyness, her space in her place, and is a dialectic. In a small community one seeks to feel secure which comes largely from knowing

everyone. She is speaking of a situation in which her scale of place is threatened.

Aunt Vera commented that "There is more love and caring in Westfield," speaks again to the sense of place, that Westfield has a particular kind of culture to it.

Unlike Mrs. Christian or Aunt Vera, who do not feel that their place is Stokes County, Mrs. McIntyre, though she has lived all hear life on her ancestral farm, sees herself as belonging to both counties, especially as an educator. She knows the history of the Westfield Community. However, her place has largely been limited to those two counties although she attended graduate school at UNC-Greensboro and she and her late husband maintained a home in Guilford County. Even though her place is larger than any of the other teachers with whom I spoke, Mrs. McIntyre's personal connections have resulted from the scale of her place as shown by her relationships in both Surry and Stokes Counties.

Miss Lena's place seems to be Westfield although her space is limited "I didn't grow up in a place like this that was so politically minded." Referring to new residents she noted, "They just found out what a good place Westfield was."

To Mrs. Jessup, the loss of the school is also a personal one, which will interrupt her sense of place in Westfield. Her comments reveal her desire for continuity.

"I don't feel very good about it. I want Westfield School left where it is . . . I have the feeling that Westfield School should remain where it is."

In terms of place, Mrs. Lowe has been alienated from the white schools. She did feel that she became an integral part of the white school systems, her sense of place was determined not only by geography, but also by race. Her comment "You go to school to improve your race" is a very different notion from that given by the white teachers. Mrs. Lowe has a place in a positive sense in that she is defined by her membership in the black community. In a negative sense, she is defined by the boundary between the black and the white communities. Therefore, Mrs. Lowe defines herself not only by place, but by race.

She further recognized economic boundaries which could have potentially separated her from other students at Winston-Salem State. Through academic achievement and extra-curricular activities, she proudly stated, "But I was right in there!" Thus she felt that she had found her place, that she was accepted by the other students whom she perceived as more advantaged.

In order for the community school to serve the community, Mrs. Lowe believes that a critical factor is the local teacher. "A local teacher will do more good that one you bring in from the outside, because he or she

is interested in everything that takes place in the community, because he or she is trying to build a better place to live."

Teachers' Reactions to the Interviews

Drafts of the interviews were shown to the teachers who participated with the permission of the UNCG Human Subjects Committee. I also revisited the teachers when I had completed the first drafts of my interpretations, both out of courtesy and fairness, to allow them to comment on my interpretations of their views.

Due to her limited vision, I read to Mrs. Jessup both the interview and my interpretation. She listened quietly throughout and made no interruptions or suggestions. When I finished, I asked if she had any comments. She replied with conviction, "That's right. That is what I meant and I wouldn't change a thing!"

When I visited Mrs. Lowe, she read both the interview and my interpretation to herself without comment. When she had finished, she smiled and said, "That's me!"

Mrs. Christian also read through both sections and laughed, "Well, I always knew that I could write a book, and now I don't have to!"

Aunt Vera did not choose to read her interview or my interpretation when I returned them to her. However,

later at my parents fiftieth wedding anniversary reception, she approached me with her granddaughters and the very first words she spoke to me were, "Ricky, I think that I might have changed my mind. The girls seem very happy at the new school and I believe that everything is going to be all right!"

Mrs. McIntyre also chose not to discuss her interview or my interpretation when I visited and requested that I leave them with her. I later saw her at a restaurant in Pilot Mountain and asked her if she had had a chance to review the materials. She said with a broad smile, "I'll tell you one thing. After you have done all that work on me, I can't imagine how much you must have done to do all of us. If they don't give you that degree at UNC-G, you just let me know and I'll go down there and find out why!"

Van Dearmin also seemed surprised by the volume of the material, and pleased with both the interview and my interpretation. He declined to make any changes or corrections when I gave him the opportunity.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY: INTERPRETATIONS AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents in four sections the implications of this study insofar as they can now illuminate the larger issues involved. The first section presents an overall view of the present state of the Westfield community, based largely, but not entirely, upon the interviews. This includes my experiences, the history of the community, and my knowledge of subsequent events. The second section attempts to relate the broader issues discussed in this study to the historical interpretations of Tyack, Kastle, and Katz as well as those of Peshkin for relevance to particular issues of education in the United States. In a departure from my original plan, I informally met with former staff members who had both attended and worked at the old Westfield School and now were employed at the new Westfield School and have included their comments and my analysis as the third portion of this chapter. The final portion of this chapter is a personal epilogue, a reflection upon the meaning of this study for me.

My study of the Westfield community began with research into its history. I have found that many of the values and traditions of those early founders of the Westfield Friends Meeting, particularly the emphasis on family, education, and religion have continued to the present day. Although Quakerism has continued to exist and even flourish since its reestablishment following the Civil War, only a minority of community residents are Quakers today. Nevertheless, their influences remain strong. The Tom's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, which was established in 1833 after the Westfield Friends Meeting dissolved in 1828, has also declined in membership as its members have passed away. It is the First Baptist Church of Westfield, established in 1870, that draws the few new residents in the community and continues to grow and serve the community. Many, many Baptist families there have ancestors who only two or three generations before were members of either the Westfield Friends Meeting or Tom's Creek Primitive Baptist Church. Membership in these churches was blurred until only about 1956 when permanent ministers were obtained. Until this time, community members worshiped at all three churches on a rotating basis. Such a phenomenon certainly added to the community cohesiveness.

The greatest change in the community of Westfield that has occurred in the past twenty years has been the

influx of new residents, principally from West Virginia, who come easily to Westfield via Interstate 77. They reside primarily in the mobile home park next to Tom's Creek Primitive Baptist Church. These residents are renting these trailers often with government-subsidized assistance. Often they are transients seeking employment. To most of the residents of the community whose families have been in the area for over two hundred years, they seem very alien.

The occupational demographics of the community have also changed. As recently as twenty years ago, the school routinely ran on half-day schedules for the first two weeks of the term, so that children could assist with the tobacco harvest. At present, no children are required to assist with family farms during the harvest season. In fact, no families are currently engaged in tobacco farming full-time and these are farmers who have leased tobacco allotments from their neighbors. Most of the families now work in textile mills in Pilot Mountain, or Mount Airy. Many also commute to work in Winston-Salem which is only a twenty-minute drive from Pilot Mountain via the super highway US 52.

These changes have led to several other changes in the community. Few residents remain in the community during the daytime working hours. Accordingly, there is a shortage of daytime volunteers to assist with daytime

activities for the Westfield Volunteer Fire Department. Formerly the farmers in the vicinity were available for duty at all times. Another dying community tradition is the gathering of farmers at the local general stores on days "when it's too wet to plow" or in the evenings. The closing of John Hunter's store over twenty years ago, and of Frank Jessup's store in 1990 after almost sixty years of existence has lessened the daily personal contact with community members.

Improved roads have also allowed residents to shop regularly in Pilot Mountain or Mount Airy on a regular basis not only for dry goods, but also for groceries. At present, the Westfield Superette, Lawson's Grocery, and the new Jessup's Produce sell food and gasoline in Westfield. In past years residents were served for fertilizer, tires, and even clothing by local merchants. It would seem that the loyalties of the community are becoming divided between tradition and more modern convenience.

Some community cohesiveness has been maintained, however, by the newly established Ruritan Club, the Westfield Volunteer Fire Department established in 1963, and the Westfield Athletic Booster Club. The latter is currently seeking an agreement with the Surry County Board of Commissioners to lease the cafeteria building and gym at the old Westfield School. Members of the Ruritan Club

and WVFD declined to enter into such an agreement when they learned that liability insurance of approximately one million dollars was required in the lease agreement. Whether the Booster Club can financially and organizationally maintain the buildings to function as a recreational resource for the children remains to be seen. The fates of the main building and the primary building are undecided.

Speaking to several residents of the community at the annual American Red Cross Bloodmobile at the WVFD in December, 1993, I found that many residents feel that the loss of the school to the community has yet to be determined. Those with children are grateful for the new Westfield School plant, even though it is outside the community, but others feel that, because the school is gone, a general decline in the community has begun. Clearly, an era has passed for Westfield. The community will continue to exist as a residential area with its own post office, telephone exchange, churches, small grocery stores, medical clinic, and community organizations. However, its growth--indeed, any change except decline--is doubtful.

Peshkin (1982) introduced the concept of boundary which I have come to see as not only geographical divisions, but metaphorical ones. In Westfield, the principal boundary is that of race. The conversation with

Mrs. Lowe revealed the fact that such a boundary still exists in the community and will continue to exist. The community boundaries also point to a concept not developed by Peshkin, that of exclusion. While he speaks of integration as a function of the community school, he does not speak to the paradox of community: that is, a community includes its own members while by definition excluding others. That dimension loomed much larger in this study than in Peshkin's work, particularly in terms of the transient members of the community who reside in the trailer parks. However, I came to realize that the newcomers are not the principal cause of change in the community, for they are themselves members of the community. The political constituency has changed. The consciousness of the community has changed. I believe that the interviews reflect the notion that the world has changed. The cultural and social setting has profoundly changed to the degree that the notion of the school being intimately integrated into the community no longer exists to the extent that the teachers experienced. The intimacy and personal relationships they discussed have been replaced by more detached, impersonal connections.

A second concept discussed by Peshkin, that of integrity, is closely related to boundaries. By exploring this issue I came to perhaps my central most important understanding of this research. The retired teachers that

were interviewed see their family, their church and their school as central to their integrity. Further, they see all of these as a whole rather than separate institutions. Indeed, the function of the school to the community is not an issue to these teachers as, for them the school is community.

School and Community: Historical and Theoretical Interpretations

Some of the issues of this dissertation can be examined from a larger historical perspective. When this project was begun three educational issues were identified: (1) professional versus public control, (2) professional responsibilities versus community membership and (3) central versus local control. The traditional viewpoint of the educational history of the United States as one of a linear, perpetual, progressive growth and improvement to widen opportunities and widen the horizons of educations for more people has recently been challenged by revisionists such as Katz (1975), Kaestle (1983), and Tyack (1984) whose critiques indicate that progressive education has led to the professionalization of teachers and education and the emergence of class issues. These writers contend that the professionals who sought to "take politics out of education" were actually seeking the power to control the local community schools by putting elitists

in charge of public education. They described the "progressive education" movement as a reaction to the political corruption that had occurred in the nineteenth century. The issue of power, of deciding who was going to control the schools became central.

Viewed from the context of social class, the movement was about the clash between those who sought local control and local autonomy with those seeking professional control of education. From another perspective, however, these locals could be seen as community leaders attempting to preserve the mores and customs of their districts and communities, particularly those with large immigrant populations. Those of the professional class can be viewed as the well-educated, Protestant elite. Therefore rather than a contest between progressives and local politicians, the battle was actually one of a class conflict.

Local communities wanted to hire local teachers, or failing that, at least teachers of the same ethnic, social, and cultural background as the community. Professionals, leading the progressive movement sought to take this power away from the local citizens. Thus they sought political power are allowed to determine the philosophy or spirit of education to be inculcated in the schools. Therefore, two separate but connected issues are involved. The first is the notion of class. A teacher

may be a member of the middle class by virtue of his or her professional status in the community. Seen from the larger perspective of the overall class structure of the nation or state, the teacher ranks lower than the university professor or state school superintendent. A teacher must seek credentials and certification from the university and state school board in order to edge into the middle class. Having done so, the teacher may then rank higher socially than the farmer or other workers in the community.

The second area of conflict is that of culture. Teachers in the community may have social relationships in their church and clubs, business dealings, recreational pursuits, and other interpersonal relationships. Few of these cultural affairs present the opportunity for the teacher to discuss educational theories or other professional matters. However, a teacher who is linked professionally to a university, for example as a graduate student, may focus on these educational links to the detriment of community relationships which are excluded from these connections. Therefore the teacher may be caught in the conflict between the community and the larger aspects of the profession.

In the past, educational historians have lauded the triumph of professionalism, as providing well-trained, well-educated teachers, who need not rely on local

politics and possibly corrupt friendships. Today revisionists and radicals are viewing this battle as an issue of power, of a class conflict, because the professionals are providing the jobs to the exclusion of local citizens.

The issue of community control has been converted into the concept of accountability, which has returned power to the professionals who determine the criteria for accountability. Although local community members may not necessarily be as well qualified to run the schools, the concept of power is relevant because the central issue is the decision of determining who will control the schools. Revisionists see the professionals as having this power and being reluctant to losing it.

Parents and others in community schools in the past who have been dissatisfied with their students' progress have been denied control over the school, because the professionals fear their ignorance. As an accommodation, the professionals have adopted the policy of accountability in which a myriad of tests are given annually. In reality, the professionals are still in control by virtue of their power to determine the criteria of testing to be used to make local schools accountable. The concept of accountability has been put in professional terms in order to fend off the community. The dilemma between the lay person and the professional is substantial

and is focused upon the question: "Who owns the schools?" This political ball bounces between the public and the professionals who,through the triumph of progressivism, are now in control of the schools.

In the microcosm of this dilemma that has been explored here, the teachers in Westfield are torn between loyalty to the community--the majority of who wanted to keep Westfield School within Westfield--and their allegiance to the school board that adopted the middle school concept which, specifically, involved building a new K-5 school outside the community and organizing a new 6-8 middle school in Pilot Mountain. This is not just a case of conflict between community involvement and professional expertise. Most basic here are social and moral issues, not professional ones such as the discussions of cost-effective school or the latest educational ideas. These issues have been translated, the language has been changed by the professionals from a moral and cultural issue to a technical issue. There is no professional discourse today to say that we have to preserve the community. We have the notion of integration for racial purposes, the notion of improving the performance of the children, but there is no language, no educational tradition to which the citizens of Westfield can turn. Their language, predicated upon the concept of the school as community is not used. They have not

developed such language for there is no accessible ideology for it.

Citizens might be given the opportunity to choose for their students whether they want schools to provide a sense of community in connection with who they are, or whether it is better to have schools prepare students to leave and adapt to the rest of the country. Instead of this question, the argument has become: Under what conditions are the kids going to learn? What is a good way to use resources? What is a good education? These questions are ripped aside from the moral and cultural issues, and are technical in nature, rather than communal. For example, the location of the new Westfield School was determined by demographics, topography, and cost. Such issues represent a different language from the orientation and traditions of the life-long residents. The issue of power then is whose language gets to be used? Which set of criteria is chosen? The revisionist history speaks to the notion that in progressive education, the professionals have won the day.

The conflict for teachers is inherent in this situation and others. In the early days of public education, teachers were hired by a group of local families, a community. Today, the teachers are hired by the professionals who set the standards for admission into the profession. The concept of setting national

curriculum standards for content and performance is now being espoused.

Community control can be arbitrary and narrow, and in such case this professionalization can be useful and rational. The professionals were pleased that they were able to de-politicize education as it had been taken as a function of the local community leaders. Nonpartisan school boards were elected to replace those appointed by the mayor, city council, or county commissioners. In opposition to political control, local citizens could run the schools through nonpartisan elected school boards. In reality, these school boards have largely been made up of those citizens who can financially afford to run for an unpaid political office: the bankers, insurance executives, university professionals, who compose another social class. Recently in Stokes County the school board members have been paid $500.00 per year and Surry County quickly followed by giving its school board members for the first time in its history a stipend of $200.00 annually. While many citizens decried these expenses from the public school funds, such monies might permit more citizens to run for the school board. It is interesting to note that of the five members of the current board in Surry County one is a retired teacher and one is a former superintendent. Kaestle noted that progressive education leaders felt they were able to depoliticize education by

putting it into the hands of the school board. However, we now ostensibly have a nonpartisan school board, which represents another social class.

It can be argued that the professional forces appear to be getting stronger in light of the issues of national standards for teaching and the attempts to privatize education through the use of vouchers. By failing to provide for a sophisticated public debate, the professionals have, in effect, misled the public as to the real issues of public education which are not professional issues at all, but rather social and cultural issues. The professionals have been able to translate education from social into professional concerns.

It would appear that the professionals have won over the localists. For example, the decision to implement the middle school concept and tie that to the building of a new Westfield School was made by the superintendent and the school board. The community was then allowed to vote upon the package.

Progressivism developed the notion of taking the politics out of education. Revisionists such as Katz (1975) and Tyack (1984) noted that party bosses could also be influential, well-placed people who work in the community to help others. In the Westfield community, there were elders who performed this function. This is what is going on in a couple of these stories. An

elaborate professional personnel policy, was not needed because there were persons right in the community to care for others. These stories represent that difference.

For example, Dr. Tom Smith was the medical doctor, pastor, and chairman of the school board. He donated land for both the church and the school adjacent to his home. The progressives might term him the equivalent of a "party boss." He was not an educator, not a professional, yet he made major decisions for the community such as placing teachers in position. That ad hoc method of hiring was replaced by a professional system. Similarly, Mr. O.H. Hauser, who was the first school principal and who followed Dr. Smith as pastor of the Baptist Church, often engaged in activities beyond the call of his profession, such as going to visit Mrs. Christian as a student and later taking her to Guilford College. Community cohesiveness was enhanced by personal relationships. However, when carried to extremes, personal relationships can be corrupted by favoritism or nepotism. Progressive education sought to prevent or replace corruptions by a means of a professional system. The notion of personal intervention, e.g., "Dr. Tom took care of me," expressed by Mrs. Christian, might have addressed the needs of the community, but suggested the possibility of selective attention. Dr. Tom could not take care of everybody, only some people. Did the black residents receive the same

considerations? Did those people who were taken care of reflect a particular social stratum? Within the social structure of the community some were more favored than others.

Like everywhere, there are probably cliques in the Westfield community, and probably always have been. Everybody knows everybody in Westfield, but some people know some people better than others. Perhaps the people I have spoken to are a part of the power structure, part of the elite stratum. One of the reasons that some people love the community is because they have power; they are vested in the community. They have reason to stay in the community. They derive a certain amount of benefit from being in it. The particular segment of the community that I talked to, the teachers, are an elite within the context of their Westfield community.

The teachers interviewed may be amused to be described as elite. Mrs. Lowe is the most respected member of the black community, as viewed by both blacks and whites. These teachers are those for whom most people in the community have the greatest respect. When they lose their school, they lose the basis of their power. In a larger community that power would be lessened by other elite groups such as business persons or politicians.

As a result of this study, I came to understand the teachers' perception of the school as community. However,

the professionalization of teachers has often been designed to remove that consciousness. Unlike the churches, the WVFD, or Ruritan Club, inclusion in the school community requires only residence in the district. Therefore, the sense of the school being "ours" is felt by perhaps more people than any other community organization. Certainly the importance of the school itself both physically and operationally tends to give a commonality to its residents. This importance underlines the fact that the residents' support of the school is predicated on several complicated issues including personal well-being, personal preference, and even personal power and control.

People talk about community values and the preservation of a certain way of life, but it is very difficult to define what that is. When the American flag of which Aunt Vera spoke is not flying at the school, not even at half-mast, its absence symbolizes a loss of great value to the long-time residents. For Aunt Vera, specifically, the lost school means the loss to her of her granddaughters. In contrast, Van Dearmin's notion is that values are formed not from where you are, but what you believe in. The teachers' values reveal primarily a connection to place. The principal wants the values of the new middle school to be caring and sharing.

Since I have begun this research, in addition to my Chapter I teaching, I have become the Surry County Schools

Chapter I Parent Involvement Coordinator. Through research in that field and in holding workshops for teachers and parents, I have become even more convinced of the necessity for local input into the school curriculum.

Although I had not defined the concept when I began my research, I can now see that I have always believed that schools should not be an entity unto themselves or as a separate community. I believe that schools should be a vital, integral necessary component of the community itself; ideally, the school is community.

A Conversation With Teachers of Both the Old and New Westfield Schools

On May 19, 1994, I spoke with five staff members who had both attended and taught at the old Westfield School and had almost completed their first year at the new Westfield School. I was seeking their perspective and therefore did not come to talk with them with a prepared set of questions. I had not talked at any length with any of these individuals previously, and therefore I had no preconceived notions about their observations and experiences over the 1993-1994 school term. I approached this task with some reluctance, for I knew that their personal interests and comments would likely be in conflict with the professionals who decided to close and

remove Westfield school from their community. Realizing that they would insist on speaking only with anonymity, I assured them of that status prior to our conversation. I had a very strong interest in knowing how these teachers now felt, having completed their first year at the new school, and believing their views would be particularly helpful to me at a time when I began to reflect on the implications of my study.

I met with five staff members after the regular school day in one of their classrooms. They agreed to allow me to record our conversation on audio tape. The teachers were very open in their comments and all adamantly insisted that I not identify them by name in my study.

The first teacher began by stating, "Well, I felt like a poor relation here this year."

"The ugly step-child?" I asked.

"Kind of."

I asked the teacher to elaborate and I probed as to whether she meant that all teachers were viewed or treated equally at the new Westfield School."

"By the parents," she replied.

She indicated by a nod of her head that she meant the parents of students from Pilot Mountain.

Teacher Number Four interjected, "For example, now that we have been in school this long, I can see things

differently from the first of the year. At the first of the year there were [Pilot Mountain] parents who requested that their children be in the other teacher's room [who taught the same grade], because that teacher was from Pilot Mountain. That was not because that was a specific person, but because that teacher had taught at Pilot Mountain."

I asked if this teacher lived in Pilot Mountain.

"No, she lived in the district. It was just because this person had taught at Pilot Mountain for many years, and they preferred that their child be in that class."

I inquired if this was just a case of familiarity in which the parents knew the former Pilot teacher better that the teacher from the old Westfield School.

"Well, that may had been probably true. But there were a lot of sarcastic remarks made such as 'I can see why Westfield children have low [standardized test] scores.' But our scores were not lower."

Teacher Number One interrupted, "Some of it you have to chalk up to ignorance. But it is still being said, and it still sheds a bad light on some situations. I think that some of it has eased off a little, like the other teacher said, that was only at the first of the year. I don't know what everybody else is going to say, and I am not saying this just because some of the teachers

in here have some of my former students, but I have found, and I realize that this is not a fair thing to do, but I just naturally, without even thinking about it compare the children I have from the old Westfield School [district] with those from the old Pilot Mountain School. I am proud to say that they came out on top, the old Westfield children. As far as knowing how to behave, following directions, their background in phonics, in any classroom experience, they [Westfield] were way, way ahead. Some of my students [this year] have never had the experience of sitting down in their seats and being quiet and doing something. Now I have had my say!"

Another staff member (Number Five) entered the room and I asked her how things were different here from the old Westfield. She smiled thoughtfully and said as she sat down, "We don't get to see each other much."

Teacher Number Two agreed. "I was going to say that this is the first time we've been together. I never see [Teacher Numbers One or Four]. I told you when you came in that I <u>thought</u> her room was the second one on the right down this wing. That is what I mean, I never see them, never!"

Number Five: "We don't have time to do too much talking. We don't go in the lounge.

"Number Two: "It [socialization] is only at a faculty meeting.

"Teacher Number Three made her first comment and contrasted the school environments. "It is like going to a business. There is no harmony. There is no mutual acquaintance. It is not like a family. This is a job. You come to school, you do your job, and you go home. This is it."

As an example, Number One illustrated, "A teacher completed her Master's Degree last week and I did not know she was working on it."

I noted to Number Three that the concept of family had been important to all of us. I explained that I had been interviewed for the school paper where I now teach and I commented that the faculty was much like old Westfield in that many of the staff grew up in the rural community and had taught there many years. I suggested that I felt more at home there than at a previous school.

Number Three quickly reacted, "You wouldn't feel at home here. The atmosphere is completely different. It is just not a home atmosphere. We don't see each other for one reason or another."

Number One maintained, "You don't feel like anybody cares."

Number Three concurred, "Right. You just come and do your job. And I will say this, we were talking about how they [parents] preferred a Pilot teacher. Sometimes I

feel as though the administration caters more to some teachers than to others."

I asked if she felt that the principal, because he was the principal at the old Westfield, went out of his way to oblige teachers who had not taught at his old school, and she agreed.

Number Five revealed, "I am somewhat afraid to comment."

Number Two contended, "Because, as I said, we have not talked before [as a group]."

Number Five continued, "I have got along fine. I do see more of the teachers that some of these teachers do. At the first of the year, I was worried to death. This was just like a new job. But I can say that we have got along fine. Whether I can work with the teachers not from old Westfield in a manner to which they are accustomed, I am not sure. But I did have one of them to tell me the other day that she appreciated what I did. And this was not a Westfield person."

I asked, "Do you still see yourselves as Westfield and Pilot?"

Number Five remarked first, "I think that we do and I think that they do, too. Just like the other night at our PTO meeting, there was a slip of the tongue. Someone was reading something inspirational and at the end it was supposed to end with 'Westfield School', but the speaker

said, 'Pilot Mountain School'. There was a moment of stunned silence. This was supposed to have been a positive message, but the slip destroyed that. He really didn't mean anything by it."

I then asked about the new, modern facility in which we were talking.

Number One disclosed, "Until last week, I would have rather been over there [Old Westfield]. We could not get the heat regulated."

Number Two observed, "It does have air-conditioning which is really, really nice. But that is the plus."

Number One responded, "But you need the air-conditioning regulated. I had children sitting in my room with wet hair."

I had viewed that the rooms seemed to be fully twice as large as at the old Westfield, with much more storage space.

Number Two agreed. "Yes. We have water in each classroom, sinks in each room. I could not ask for a nicer room.

Number Four added, "In terms of the facility, there is a 100% improvement. You don't have to go outside to go to lunch, music, P.E.'"

"But as far as equipment," Number Two clarified, "no. Overhead projectors, carts, filmstrip projectors,

tape recorders, VCRs, maps, no. Nothing like we had at [old] Westfield, no."

"We don't know what happened to all of our equipment" insisted Number One. "A lot of materials never got here for some reason. We were told by the county maintenance supervisor not to bring a single piece of furniture out of the old building. He said that he did not want to find some of that old furniture over here in this two-million dollar building. We did have to go back and get a few things. David Goins, [custodian at old and new Westfield] tried to tell the supervisor. The teachers needed some of their equipment. We did get some file cabinets."

I then pressed the group, "How is it better, or is it better for the children at this new Westfield School?"

I have always said that the only thing that the children have here that they didn't have at [old] Westfield School is just the facility. At [old] Westfield School we had teachers who cared, excellent teachers. We had equipment, anything you wanted. We had materials. Now I see that we had wonderful equipment and materials, that we didn't know how to appreciate," professed Number Two.

"For me, from my standpoint, its the facility that is better," replied Number Four. The children feel prouder of what they have here. We have had a big deal

over making black marks here on the new floors. I have children in my room who will, on their hands and knees if they are lined up in the hall, start rubbing black marks off the floor. It they see somebody else doing it, they say 'Don't do that!' I have had kids put their feet up on the walls, and one of the other children would say, 'You're getting the wall dirty. Don't do that!'

"We have room to move around [in the classroom], which we didn't at old Westfield," offered Number Two, "and to set up centers. It is just really nice."

"Can you tell me about the school climate?" I asked.

"We had a different atmosphere. There is a strain here, stress and strain. You always feel that someone is looking over your shoulder, and not in a positive manner. They are looking over your shoulder trying to find something negative," Number One pointed out.

Number Five described, "We have had an unusual year, because of the combining of two schools, politically. News has carried to the county school board members that has put a strain on us."

I asked for clarification. "When you first said 'strain' I thought you were suggesting competition among the teachers. Is that what you meant?"

Number One answered, "There is a lot of comparison by the administration and by the parents. I frankly feel as though I have got along with all the other teachers. However, these outside influences, the school board and the newspapers, that are filtering in to keep things stirred, to blow things up bigger than they are, parents mostly. Why can't parents accept the fact that the school is here, it has been named, and it will take an Act of Congress to get it changed."

"We have had more trouble out of parents, I was just overwhelmed with parents during the first month of school" remarked Number Five. "So many came to school not only just to eat, but just to be here. We have a lot of volunteers. But I think that we have many parents who have been here to just to check on things."

I asked, "Is this a problem because these parents are strangers to you, you don't know all of them as you did the parents at old Westfield?"

Numbers Five and One complied, however, Number Two evoked, "I know about as many parents of my students as I did at old Westfield. It really surprised me when parents and grandparents walked into my room, it really surprised me as to how many I knew."

"They are very interested," expressed Number Five.

Number Two resumed, "But some of the teachers with whom I work have been used to working with other teachers,

which I have not been doing. They said that we needed to meet, to plan our programs so that we would all have the same materials and present the same things because parents would compare [teachers]."

"That is what had caused a lot of the stress and strain," attested Number One.

"Right, and that is what they [parents] have tried to do," acknowledged Number Two, "and that [planning sessions] is what we have tried to do. We meet together in grade level sessions to plan our activities. We try to plan the same activities. Sometimes we try to present it in a little different way, or do a little something different, but they are getting the same skills because of comparison."

"Whereas, all of you were just teaching a single grade level each at the old Westfield," I reasoned.

"Right," rejoined Number Two. "For example, I just recommended to have some children tested for the gifted and talented program. Well, I never thought about saying anything to any of the other teachers about that, it just didn't enter my mind. I guess I should have, I guess I should have let them know, so that they could also have recommended some. But that did not enter my mind."

Number Three questioned, "Why would the other teachers have cared?"

"Well if these children had qualified for the gifted program, and children in the other teacher's classes had not been, that might have been a problem," contended Number Two.

This situation hinting of quotas seemed to be revelation to the other teachers present and was greeted with hoots and chuckles.

Number Three retorted, "We worry too much about stuff like this over here. We worry a lot in my room as to whether they have ever made their first "C" or not in their life."

Number Two continued, "The little girls did not qualify and the comment was made, 'Well good, maybe the moms won't talk now.'"

Number One pointed out, "That is a big problem isn't it?"

"Pressure from parents," insisted both Numbers Four and Five.

"The principal held an Open Forum here for parents. I heard many teachers say that he would not be successful, but he did well. He seemed to put the parents in their places. The teachers told him the next day that he did a good job. They told him that some of these parents had never been stood up to before. These parents generally told the administration how they thought things should go," discussed Number Five.

"They were trivial things with which we had never had to contend," thought Number Four. "These parents were so upset at our PTO meeting. Our PTO has been put under the gun this year also. There have been complaints and complaints that the PTO did not do things to suit everyone. The PRIZE program was not good enough. At the Open Forum they were complaining about why the principal had selected the free materials from a program with a grocery chain, without consulting some of the parents first. They questioned as to why this was not brought up at a PTO meeting. He plainly told them, 'That is my decision to make, not yours.' Things like that caused problems. They questioned as to why a television was purchased, why weren't they consulted? This was not a PTO decision, or done with PTO funds, but done through the grocery chain program."

"Is there mistrust here. Do you think that as the faculty and the parents come to know each other better, that these problems will even out over the years?" I asked.

Number Three commented first. "I think the teachers will do fine. I think its just a matter of having Westfield over here and Pilot Mountain over there and never the twain shall meet. That is the way that I feel."

I rejoined that I had visited Shoals Elementary School a few times, and since old Shoals was combined with the other half of Pilot Elementary, if any of the teachers had heard any echoes of similar situations there.

"It's wonderful," smiled Number Three somewhat sarcastically. "We have been told that.

"Number Five quickly confirmed, "We have heard over and over Shoals School does so and so. Shoals School is not falling apart."

"I have had parents to say," interjected Number Four, "that we are going to take our child out of this school and take them to Shoals."

"And we, at my grade level, are worried about whether Shoals will do much better on the End of Grade tests next week, because it looks like we are on the poorer side of the [East Surry district], and the smarter kids ended up over there and they are going to do really well.

I asked, and all agreed, that they believed that the socioeconomic level was higher in the Shoals district. I asked if they felt that they were not only being compared with teachers within Westfield School, but the school itself is being compared with Shoals.

"Well not to this great of an extent before," maintained Number One.

I noted that old Westfield School in the past had always been compared and favorably with the old Pilot Elementary and old Shoals Elementary. "But that is not the same as taking a school [Pilot] and splitting it," explained Number Three.

"Right" agreed the others.

"And not splitting the teachers. That is where it [the problem] is," declared Number Two.

"One of our teachers who was not known by several parents was over in the drug store in Pilot Mountain and she overheard our school being discussed. This lady said that there was only one teacher over here, [new Westfield] who was worth anything. She said that she was taking her children to Shoals next year," added Number Three.

I implied that I knew many of the former teachers from the old Pilot Elementary and certainly knew those present, and that I felt that the new Westfield faculty was very strong indeed. When I asked if they did not agree, there was only silence.

After a moment, Number Four spoke. "I don't know what to think."

Number One advocated, "I don't think that it is the teachers that are causing the problems. It is the parents."

"Right, the outside influences," confirmed Number Four.

Number One continued, "The [Pilot Mountain] parents can't accept the fact that they didn't get what they wanted. They wanted the elementary school over there in Pilot Mountain."

"They didn't want their children split up" opined Number Two.

"They didn't want to drive this far over here to pick up their children. About 100 children of our enrollment of 425 arrive and leave in private cars," indicated Number Five.

I asked why the parents would drive seven miles to pick up their students in cars.

"Because they don't want their children to ride a bus," insisted Number Five.

I asked if this is a carry-over of a tradition at the old Pilot Elementary.

"Yes, it is," reasoned Number Four. "They did not want to give up any conveniences that they had. They wanted it to stay as it was. I think that there are some people who just do not want their children on the bus, period, now that's it. They [children] get in trouble on the bus, other kids pick on them on the bus, reasons like that. Then there are those people [parents] for whom it is a social matter. It is a status thing that they can pick their children up at school. 'I don't have to work,

therefore I can pick up my child, deliver my child, that kind of thing, to put it quite honestly"

"They line up here by 1:45 PM. They sit and talk then" expressed Number Three. "It's a little difficult for me to getting adjusted to this. I was used to [an enrollment of] 200, and now that had doubled. We only had about 10% who were picked up by the parents at old Westfield, and now that percentage is much greater," said Number Five. "Some of the parents go into the lunchroom in bunches. The cafeteria manager was not used to that at old Westfield, but I never heard anything from her."

"I guess they [Pilot parents] thought that we would just fall apart, that we just didn't know how to handle ourselves," said Number Two sardonically.

With just one other person teaching at the same grade level explained Number Four, "I could not have asked for a better person to work with. It has helped me a lot to see what another teacher was doing, to be able to talk to her and say 'What did your teachers do in this grade last year?' I think it has helped me to plan better throughout the year, to get more materials, to pace myself a little better. For me to say, 'We should have already covered this matter by this time [of the year],' I think that [in that respect] it has helped me from that standpoint.

Number Two agreed, "That is a plus. It really is."

Number Four continued, "I have probably covered more material this year than I ever have in the same length of time. It has helped to keep me on track, I think. To have to meet with her every week and say 'Look, by next week at this time we are going to be at this point.' She might suggest something to try that I haven't done before, and that is neat. I think that has helped the kids."

All of the teachers except one who has a preschooler had their own children attend the old Westfield School. I asked them whether they would have preferred their own children to attend this new school or the old school.

Number Five answered first. "Probably here, in terms of getting along with other students from other backgrounds. Although, as far as what they have learned, probably the old school. The teachers were fine."

"I would have just as soon as [my child] attended old Westfield. I thought it had a good faculty, a good strong faculty," revealed Number Two.

"I have this situation to face next year. We live in the new Shoals School district. Should my child go to Shoals or does he come over here with me? I want him here, convenience for one thing. If I knew he would get one of the teachers from old Westfield that would suit me just fine, but I know that is not going to happen,"

divulged Number Four addressing her last comment to Number Two, who laughed knowingly.

At this point in the conversation, Numbers One and Five had to leave on personal business.

I then asked, "Are you happier here than you were over there?"

Number Two began, "I get along real well with the teachers that I work with. I could not be working with two nicer people. But they are the only two that I see often. I don't even see the [next lower level] teacher just down the hall. I do miss the closeness of the faculty talking with each other, chit-chatting in the afternoons a little. We just don't get to do that anymore, and I really do miss that.

I specifically asked Number Three, "Are you happier here?"

She reviewed, "I also get along very well with my co-workers. I have enjoyed them very much. But if I had a choice, I had just as soon be in the old place. But I have another reason, when you spend [over thirty years] in a place, you don't ever forget it. I agree with her [Number Two], because you do not . . . I mean I miss stopping by the lounge and running in chatting with someone. But I don't have time to do that. I am just rushed here and there and we have got to push this in and that in. That is the way I feel. I go for a week and

never see them [other teachers present]. I go in and sign my name in the morning and that's it. I am here for the day. We go to the cafeteria, we sit down, we eat, we come back, finish our work and go home. It is no . . ., nothing like we have had before, and I miss that. And I miss [Richard] Hauser [now at Pilot Middle School] probably more than anybody. I miss sitting on that green couch and having those hypothetical situations [discussed]. I really miss him, I do. But you just don't have time over here. There is just a different atmosphere. I do not get to the lounge. I go to the lounge maybe thirty minutes a week when I have a work period, that's it. It's just different."

Number Two proposed, "I think one thing [cause] is a larger school, a larger faculty. You just don't have the closeness that you do with a small group."

I submitted that at the beginning of her career, she taught at a large school. "That is what I mean," she replied. "We were not that close there. A lot of the teachers were in another building. I went to another system in a large school, and I did not see a lot of the other teachers. Then I came back to Westfield; it was small and we visited with each other quite often. Now here it is another large faculty. That is just the nature of a large faculty."

Number Five insinuated, "If you ask the school board, they would say, 'You are not there to socialize.'"

Number Four reacted, "But that is the only interaction you get in a school with an adult. You are with the children all day. You do not have access to a telephone, if you need to make a call. In other jobs you can."

Number Three mentioned, "That part is nicer here. You don't have to bother [the secretary]. You can use a phone on the hall."

Number Five continued, "There are a lot of interruptions in the classrooms with the telephone [intercom]. But what do you do with all these parents coming?"

Number Three granted, "They come on Friday afternoon from Twelve o'clock on."

Number Five explained, "At the beginning of the year a lot of parents were coming to pick up their children early, just to avoid that mess [traffic] out front. We finally told them that unless they had a doctor's appointment or something, they could not pick up their child early."

Noting that we had talked for an hour after school, I thanked the teachers for their time and comments.

Number Three then asked, "I don't want to put everything to blame with moving to the new school, because

I don't think that's [all]. I think another reason is that I am just really physically exhausted right now. I don't blame it all on the school. I blame it on this pressure that we feel about Dobson [central office]sending to Jimmy [Jessup, the principal] to test the kids. That is all we study, I mean that is all we study, the tests. It is not fun anymore, Rick. Teaching used to be fun, and you loved it. I loved it. But when everything is tied to what your numbers are going to be on this test, and what your rank is going to be, and what your writing scores are going to be. 'Shoals had better writing scores than Westfield.' This [competition] is all it is, it is all that we study. We feel the pressure, I am telling you that we feel the pressure. It is not fun. I used to do fun things. Fun things? Good grief! I don't have time to get things covered now."

I asked, "Are you teaching the children or are you teaching the curriculum?"

"I am teaching that Standard Course of Study," she replied with mock seriousness. Now in their next few years I don't know what kind of citizen they will be, but they will have a 6.2 and a 4.1 that I taught somewhere, but it might not help them in life. That is exactly the way I feel."

"This is something that has happened this week that I don't think has ever happened since I have been in

school, and I am not saying that the teacher has not been doing her job, but her contract has not been renewed. I don't think that has ever happened since I have been in school," commented Number Five.

"Pressure? Oh yes, there is pressure. I think the administration feels that pressure," explained Number Four.

"Yes, all the way up. I mean really, don't you feel the pressure?" fielded Number Three rhetorically.

Number Four reiterated, "To explain again how things are better for the kids; the building is much nicer. Having someone else in my grade level to work and plan with, those are the pluses. Minuses - pressure. I have felt the most pressure this year I have ever felt. The trivial things, the picky things, the things that parents pay attention to that we had never really thought about before. For example, the flap about the PTO not being consulted, playground equipment, the PRIZE program, lunches, letters have been written over things like that. It has been as thought somebody has just been looking for any little thing that they could grasp to complain about. So, there are pluses and minuses, but I think the pressure this year and not having the comraderie."

Number Two confirmed, "I think in [my] grade this year we have had pressure, that I feel that we have never had before. We don't test, but we have the report card,

the Standard Course of Study, and we have the assessment, the benchmarks, and the portfolios. For the first time a supervisor came to our school and went through each [portfolio] paper by paper. Now that came from Raleigh [North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction], just things like that.

As a summary, I asked if they felt if the decisions were being made from the top down, from Raleigh, to the Surry County Schools Office in Dobson, to the Westfield principal, to the teacher instead or if the teacher and the community were deciding what is best for the children.

"Not as far as to what is being taught," retorted Number Two, "no, not at all."

"I had a visitor last week from another [small] school in the county and he is feeling that same pressure," mentioned Number Three.

"At lot of this pressure that we are feeling would be the same regardless if we had a new school," suggested Number Four.

"I can't label everything as 'the move' that has caused all of my feelings," avowed Number Three. "This testing pressure is just enormous. It is Rick."

Number Four maintained,"But there is a bit added here, too. There is more that one class for each grade

level. I have thought, 'If the other grade does a whole lot better on the testing than my class, Oh me!'

I pointed out to her that we had a similar situation at the old Westfield where we just had one class per grade level and the scores were printed for each school by grade in the newspapers.

"Right. But you are within the same school and you have two or three teachers at the same grade level, and one class is way above everyone else, then that is another major problem. That can create some big problems" she responded.

Number Two suggested, "You know if you are a first or second year teacher that will be looked at carefully too, I feel like now."

"I think that may have a lot to do with why the contract was not renewed," thought Number Four.

"The teachers who work with me, warned me. 'Let's try to work together, because it will be compared [by parents] as to what the children do,'" said Number Two.

"What we have been told is that the parents at Pilot would come and sit in the parking lot and if a teacher arrives late for school or leaves early, they make a note and call the county office," revealed Number Three.

"Also a parent this year, that I heard about, complained that we were not taking our children outside [for P.E.] as we should. That parent had been here a lot

and knew what was going on. Now that was over in our wing," said Number Two. "So these [former Pilot] teachers have given us good advice. But, you see, I just didn't think about things like that."

"How many different ways do we have to discipline the children when they are bouncing off the wall?" asked Number Four. "I have to threaten to take a few minutes off P.E."

I mentioned that I could understand some of their feelings about moving from the school since I had moved from Westfield two years ago as my son left for college.

"I think things will be better here next year," said Number Two.

"You know how we all [at old Westfield] used to do things. If someone had a birthday, we would put cake in the lounge. We don't do that here," noted Number Three. She noted that the communication among the faculty was not as close as at old Westfield. "We got a memo that we should send some writing from our children to be bound into a book for the PTO."

"I told the PTO representative that we would write ours tomorrow. 'But we need them today," she said. "I had thirty minutes for my children to write," explained Number Two.

In an analysis of these teachers' comments, I believe that the principal change that these teachers have

found is the loss of the family that they experienced at the old Westfield School. The comment was made that this was the first time they had been together since they had been at the new school.

The fact that parents have been a concern to these teachers was revealed on several occasions. Perhaps some of the unfamiliarity with the new students' parents has been different for these teachers who normally knew all the parents, grandparents, and other relatives at the old school. They seem to feel that these unfamiliar "others" are placing unnecessary demands upon the teachers, and especially in areas of the curriculum that they consider to be rather trivial.

The pressure that these teachers feel is shared by many throughout North Carolina as accountability measures are enforced. Perhaps being in a new facility with new faculty members has only compounded this perceived pressure. The emphasis placed on test scores and the non-renewal of a new teacher's contract seems to stress these teachers emotionally to a high degree.

Being compared to other teachers is a new experience for these teachers for they were the sole teachers at their grade levels at the old Westfield. They seem to be struggling to work well with other teachers at their respective grade levels, but feel a sense of competition exists. Indeed, there will probably be a

natural competition between the new schools of Westfield and Shoals, because their size and demographics are so similar.

They all seem to greatly appreciate the fine new modern facility, but still feel that other than that factor, children were receiving an equal education at the old school.

Personal Reflections

There is a theory that the greatest literature is always grounded in place. This notion holds that unless one is connected to a place, one is not anywhere or has no identity. Pride also connects one to place. Place is the way by which individuals align themselves within the community. If Westfield is hurt, the pain is not remote. This is not Town X or PS 106, but my community.

My research, which is qualitative and therefore seeks a particular understanding, should include writing that is autobiographical, and that associates my self with my historical and cultural place. It has been my aim to come to understand myself more completely through a historical study and conversations with teachers who have shared my roots. These teachers are vital to my own understanding of my place and the complexity of personal relationships within my own place.

As a result, I have recognized that I might be so tightly bound by my sense of being from Westfield, that I fail to recognize the strength of the bonds that actually tie me to the place. My ties to my family, its history, the land, the school, the church, have bound me to Westfield. I recognize that I felt so secure and comfortable in my role as a former student and teacher at Westfield, that I failed to appreciate the fact that such velvet strings were holding me with love, security, and familiarity, but at the same time, restraining me from potential growth and understanding. Perhaps pride in my place and my traditions kept me from intellectual growth. My education and teaching career largely focused on the conformities necessary for a life in Westfield, to the exclusion of other possible careers and lifestyles. Therefore, last year, when a newly created and undefined position at the central office and teaching in a new school caused me to leave Westfield, I had strong feelings of alienation and angst I now realize were caused by the breaking of my own bonds with Westfield and learning to work with our Surry County Schools as a whole, rather than just one unit. I have learned that "place" is a dialectic between emotional needs and the freedom to seek new ideas and that freedom requires pain. I recognize that my loyalties become ingrained within me, but I am now able to step back and be an observer of my own place.

The closing of the Westfield School represents loss of place not only to me and my community, but in a larger sense, it is indicative of the changes throughout the South. We have allowed the professionals to determine our fate. I and the other teachers have come to feel that perhaps our consciousness is rooted in romantic parochialism, and that we should deny our innermost desires so as not to "stand in the way of progress."

Southern literature contains the notion of place to such a degree that the themes are not transferable to anywhere else. Because the history of the South is unique and the concept of "place" so pervasive, the Southern past is perhaps more immediate to the present than in other regions of the country. Therefore, the loss of history is feared not intrinsically, but for the resulting loss of place. Perhaps because the South is the only region which has been invaded by armed forces and has seen its culture attacked, the historical consciousness of place has featured prominently in Southern literature. Perhaps no other region so closely identifies with events of over one hundred and thirty years ago. Does the Westfield community see itself again as a victim? Because many Southerners see themselves as victims, does this sense perpetuate our myths? Myths such as the aristocratic plantations, the Myth of the Southern Gentleman, the Myth of the Southern Woman, the Myth of the happily innocent

Blacks, the Myth of White Trash, the Myth of the Hillbillies, the Mayberry Myth and others that remain from the southern culture have been increasingly attacked, but the genesis of these understandings remains though perhaps increasingly ignored or unexplored.

Myths have been perhaps best explored by Southern storytellers such as William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Tennessee Williams, W.J. Cash, Eudora Welty, and scholars such as C. Van Woodward who recognize the importance of place and incorporate its meaning into their work. Indeed, perhaps no other region of the nation is so closely associated with the oral traditions of storytelling as is the South. In my interviews, the teachers quite naturally told stories about their experiences to illustrate their own consciousness. With this study, I have sought not to create a myth with my current study nor to reinforce a skewed view of a sense of place. I have dared to confront my own story. I believe that I am now able to see beyond the romantic version of an idyllic place that perhaps exists only in the minds of those with backgrounds similar to mine. In doing so, I have had to become a stranger to a place and its people that I love. I have sought to be <u>of</u> a place but not <u>in</u> a place and to guard against being too much of an insider to be an outsider. I feel that I have been able to be true to my own deepest self as I conducted my research. I have

had to distance myself critically from my personal and historical consciousness in order to overtly come to know it. Since I have left Westfield School--in essence, the school has left me--I have been able to study it more critically.

The loss of place also quickens the loss of history. Because of the loss of the school, I have sought, through this project to preserve a part of history. I have cautioned myself not to be too quick to fit my past, my place to convenient theories; I have tried to resist the temptations to make the theorists' ideas applicable to my study, by allowing myself to come to know more deeply the uniqueness of myself, my people, and my place. I believe that my desire to earn the respect of my elders, my former teachers, my family and the community of Westfield caused me to suppress my own sense of self. This desire clearly developed from my early education as a student of these teachers and strengthened as I entered my role as a peer teacher with them. My wish to please and honor them was the principal impetus for this dissertation.

The issues involved in this study of the loss of a school to the community have become even more complex than when I began. As I asked each of the retired teachers to discuss the meaning of loss of the school, I was also asking myself the same questions. As a

teacher at Westfield School and as a native of the community, I have felt ambivalence on the question of the loss. Becoming a more highly trained member of the teaching profession and a member of the Surry County Schools Task Force on Middle Grades Education placed me in conflict with my desire to see the school of generations of my ancestors, myself, and my son continue to exist. My own conflicts were confirmed in the conversation with my former peers at the new Westfield School. My torn loyalties have not yet been resolved.

However, I still believe that the new Westfield School could have been built on the same campus that it has occupied for almost a century. Whether the middle school concept could also have been accommodated is more problematical. A 6-8 facility could have been constructed in Pilot Mountain near the present facility and the current East Surry High School. This would have left the communities of Pilot Mountain, Shoals, and Westfield with K-5 facilities. Of course this would have meant the additional expense of a new facility, the middle school, since the current Pilot Mountain Middle School has occupied the facilities of the old Pilot Mountain Elementary School, and its K-5 students have been divided between the new Shoals and Westfield Schools. Both these sites have been moved closer to Pilot Mountain, but the

Shoals Elementary still remains within the Shoals community; Pilot Mountain now has East Surry High School and Pilot Mountain Middle School, while the Westfield Elementary School is now located approximately four miles from Westfield, the only community of these three which is bereft of a school in its midst.

This study would have been more complete if I had interviewed community members in Westfield as well as educators and community members in the Pilot Mountain and Shoals communities. Especially I would have interviewed the former superintendent who largely determined the program as well as the three former members of the school board who participated in the decision. The power these people possessed to affect this change is central to the issue of the survival and identity of the community.

In further research, I would like to talk with other teachers and staff at the new Westfield School who served at the old school, but were not natives of the community and had not attended the school as students. I would also enjoy talking with the parents and children who have attended both schools. I would also like to interview the educators, parents and students at the new Shoals Elementary to compare and contrast their views with those of the Westfield Community. Finally, it would be valuable to talk with those individuals involved with the

new Pilot Mountain Middle School. Such an extended examination of the subject opened in this study would have to be longitudinal in scope for only by examining the situation over a period of time could the issues be explored.

It is my heart's desire that the new Westfield School will tend to raise the consciousness of the community as it seeks to accommodate the new order of things.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alford, R. R. (1960). "School district reorganization and community integration." Harvard Education Review, 30, 350-71.

Anscombe, F. C. (1959). I have called you Friends: The story of Quakerism in North Carolina. Boston: Christopher Publishing House.

"A short history of Westfield Baptist Church." 1978.

Bailyn, B. (1960). Education in the forming of American society. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Byrd, J. S. (1943). Westfield. Jesse Franklin Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Byrd, L. (1941, September 21). "Original survey for Surry County is found at Dobson." Mount Airy Times.

Calhoon, R. M. (1991). "Religion and individualism in early America." In R. O. Curry & L. B. Goodheart (Eds.), American chameleon: Individualism in trans-national context. Kent: Kent State University Press.

Callahan, R. (1962). Education and the cult of efficiency. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carter, W. F., & Carter, C. Y. (1976). Footprints in the hollow or Surry County and her people. Northwest Regional Library.

Coffin, A. (1894). Early settlement of Friends in North Carolina: Traditions and reminiscences. Greensboro: North Carolina Friends Historical

Collins, P. (1993, August 22). "New schools for new year." Winston-Salem Journal, p. E2. Society.

Collins, P. (1993, March 4). "Club wants school to become center." Winston-Salem Journal, p.13.

Cook, A. F. (1964, June 11). "Westfield School's history can be traced for many years." Elkin Tribune.

Cubberly, E. (1934). Public education in the United States: A study and interpretation of American educational history. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Curti, M. (1959). The social ideas of American educators. Paterson, NJ: Pagent Books.

Damron, N. (1993, May 30). "Old school to close." Mount Airy News, p. 1.

Dix, B. E. (1915). A compilation of Westfield origins. Senior Thesis, Guilford College.

Edgerton, S. H. (1991). "Particularities of 'otherness': Autobiography, Maya Angelou, and me." In Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place (p. 96). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Edwards, A. (1972). "Renovated former academy to be auctioned." Winston-Salem Journal, c.

Henshaw, S. B. (1984). The Carolina Quaker experience 1665-1985: An interpretation. Greensboro: North Carolina Yearly Meeting.

Henshaw, S. B. & Henshaw, M. E. (Eds.). (1972). Carolina Quakers: Our heritage of hope. Tercentenary 1672-1972. Greensboro: North Carolina Yearly Meeting.

Hinshaw, W. W. (1936). Encyclopedia of American Quaker genealogy (Vol. 1). Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers.

Hollingsworth, J. G. (1935). History of Surry County or annals of northwest North Carolina. Greensboro: Privately Printed.

Hughes, F. Surry County, North Carolina historical documentation map. Jamestown, NC: Custom House.

"Hundreds say goodbye to Westfield Elementary School." (1993, June 2). Pilot, 10, p. 1.

Jackson, H. B. (Ed.). 1983. The heritage of Surry County North Carolina, Vol. 1. Surry County Genealogical Association. Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company.

Kaestle, C. F. (1983). Pillars of the republic: Common schools and American society 1780-1860. New York: Hill and Wang.

Katz, M. B. (1975). Class, bureaucracy and schools: The illusion of educational change in America. New York: Praeger

Kinchloe, J. L., & W. F. Pinar (Ed.). 1991. Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Klain, Z. (1925). Quaker contributions to education in North Carolina. Philadelphia: Westbrook Publishing.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago of Chicago Press.

Lowry, H. H. (1940). "Westfield church one of first to be organized in Northwest." Winston-Salem Journal, c.

Minick, R. (1983, January 20). "1700's tax listing reveals facts about our ancestory." Mount Airy Times.

Morris, W. (1967). North toward home. Oxford, MS: Yoknapatawpha Press. Quoted in Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place (p. 146). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Owens, D. P. (1965). "Westfield school history: Seventh grade North Carolina history project."

Palmer, D. (1994, March 23). "County leases old Westfield school to boosters." The Pilot, p. 1.

Palmer, D. (1993, September 15). "New Shoals, Westfield elementary schools dedicated." The Pilot, p. 1.

Peshkin, A. (1982). The imperfect union: School consolidation and community conflict. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Peshkin, A. (1978). Growing up American: Schooling and the survival of community. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Phillips, L. A. W. (1987). Simple treasures: The architectural legacy of Surry County. Surry County Historical Society. Winston-Salem: Winston Printing Company.

Reese, W. (1986). Power and the promise of school reform: Grassroots movements during the progressive era. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Spring, J. (1990). The American school 1642-1990. New York: Longman.

Stone, F. P. (1953). History of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association from its organization in 1832 to 1953. Elon College: Primitive Baptist Publishing House.

Surry County Schools Middle Grade Task Force. (1990). "Middle schools in Surry County." Presented to the Surry County Board of Education, Dobson, N.C.

Tyack, D. B. (1974). The one best system. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Venable, M. (1978). "Education in Surry County." The Surry County book. Surry County Historical Society. Elkin: Nu-Line Printing & Photography.

Weeks, S. B. (1896). Southern Quakers and slavery: A study in institutional history. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

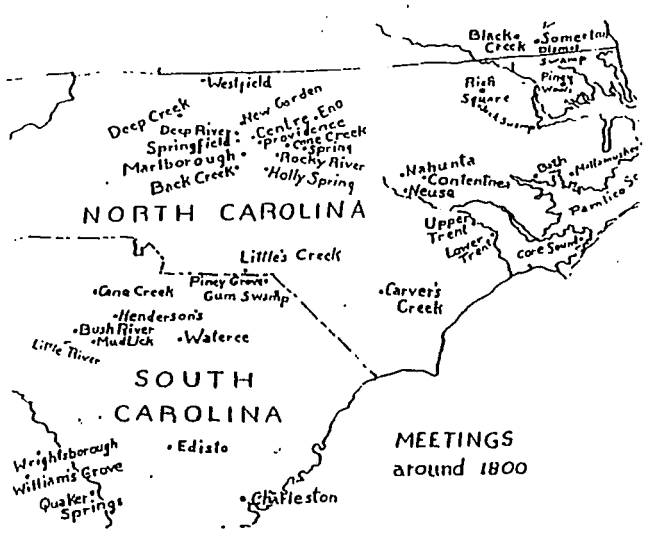
Westfield School Self-Assessment for Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. (1990). "School and community."

Wilson, R. P. (1972). "Bicenntennial of Westfield Friends: History of Westfield Friends monthly meeting."

Woodard, J. R. (Ed.). (1981). The Heritage of Stokes County North Carolina. Stokes County Historical Society. Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company.

APPENDIX A

MAPS

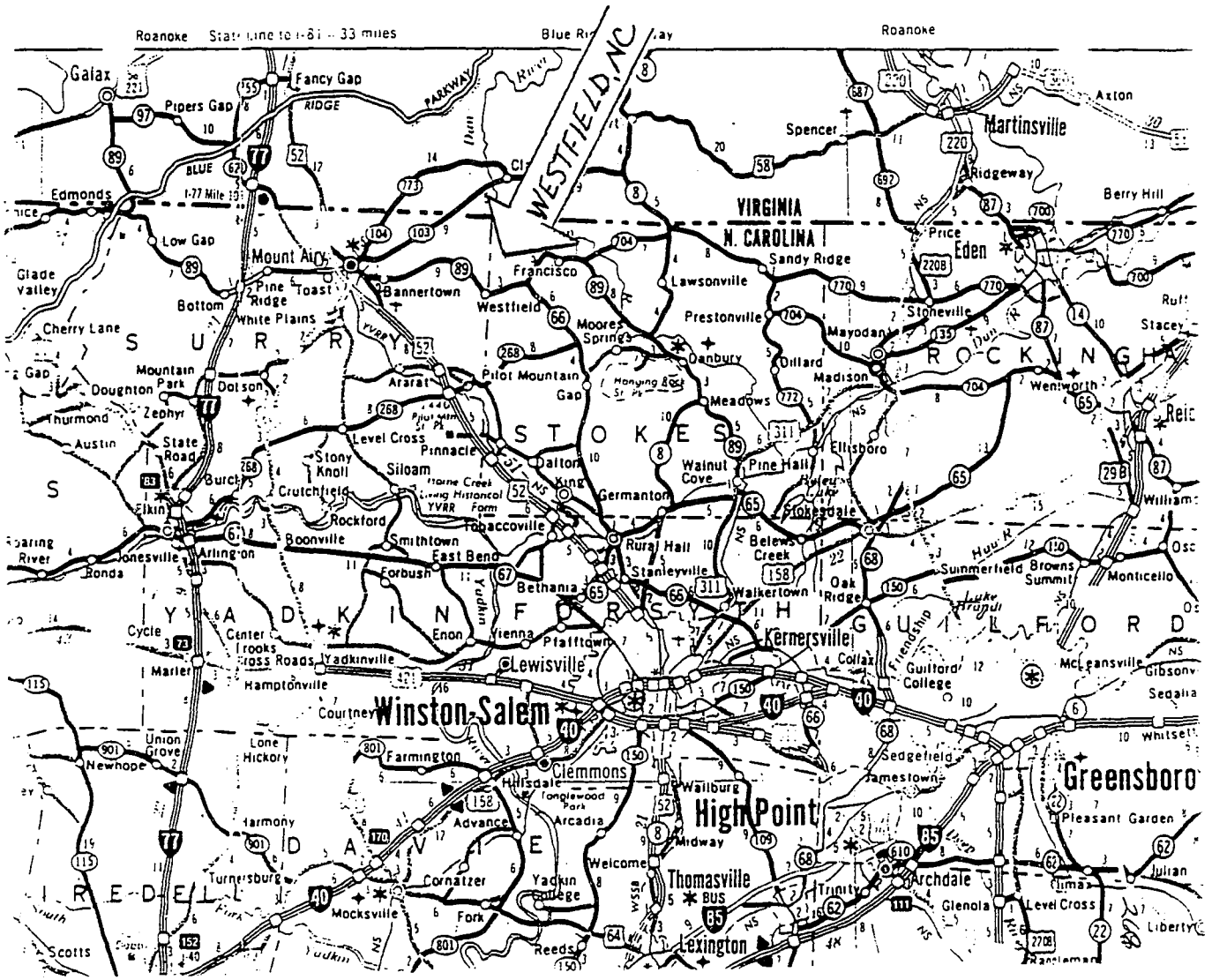


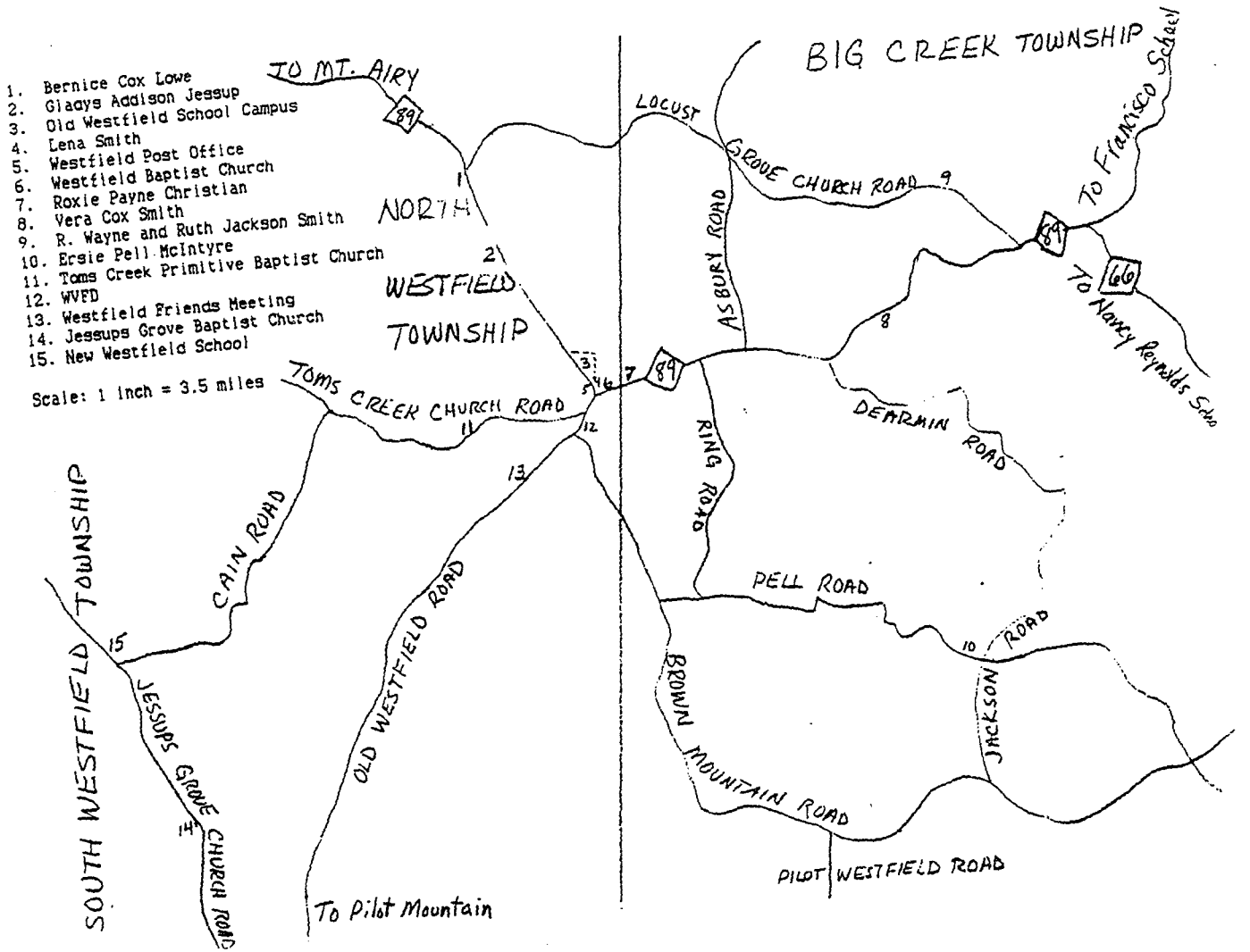
Map showing Quakers in the Piedmont around 1800.

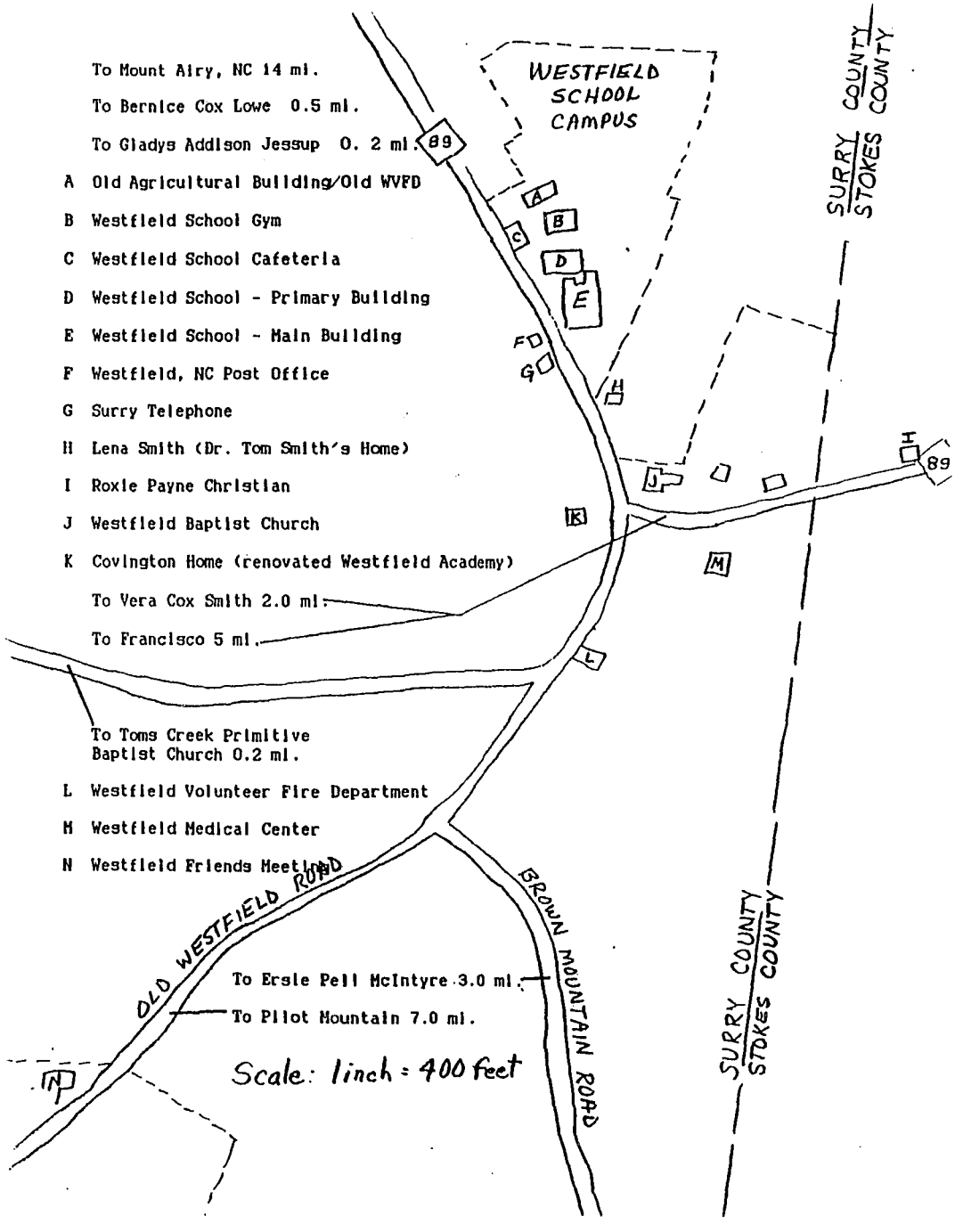
Henshaw, Seth B. and Mary Edith Henshaw, eds. 1972. Carolina Quakers: Our Heritage of Hope, Tercentenary 1672-1972. Greensboro: North Carolina Yearly Meeting.

Map showing western migration routes of Quakers prior to and following the Civil War.

Henshaw, Seth B. 1984. The Carolina Quaker Experience 1665-1985: An Interpretation. Greensboro: North Carolina Yearly Meeting.


Roanoke
Roanoke
WESTFIELD, NC
VIRGINIA
N. CAROLINA
Galax
Fancy Gap
Pipers Gap
Edmonds
Low Gap
Mount Airy
Glade Valley
Cherry Lane
Bottom
Pine Ridge
Toast
White Plains
Bannertown
Westfield
Francisco
Lawsonville
Sandy Ridge
Martinsville
Ridgeway
Spencer
Axton
Berry Hill
Price
Eden
Stoneville
Mayodan
Madison
Wentworth
Prestonville
Moores Springs
Danbury
Dillard
Meadows
Pilot Mountain
Gap
Ararat
Dobson
Mountain Park
Doughton
Zephyr
Thurmond
Austin
State Road
Elkin
Level Cross
Pinnacle
Stony Knoll
Siloam
Crutchfield
Rockford
Boonville
Arlington
Jonesville
Ronda
Sparing River
Smithtown
East Bend
Forbush
Tobaccoville
Germanton
Dalton
King
Walnut Cove
Pine Hall
Ellisboro
Stokesdale
Rural Hall
Stanleyville
Bethania
Belews Creek
Oak Ridge
Walkertown
Summerfield
Browns Summit
Monticello
Kernersville
Guilford College
Collax
McLeansville
Gibsonville
Segalia
Whitsett
Sedgefield
Jamestown
Greensboro
Pleasant Garden
Julian
Climax
Level Cross
Liberty
Archdale
Trinity
Glenola
Thomasville
Lexington
High Point
Wallburg
Midway
Welcome
Yadkin College
Cornatzer
Fork
Mocksville
Reeds
Advance
Farmington
Clemmons
Hillsdale
Arcadia
Longwood Park
Lewisville
Pfafftown
Vienna
Enon
Yadkinville
Courtney
Winston-Salem
Hamptonville
Center Cross Roads
Cycle
Marler
Union Grove
Newhope
Lone Hickory
Harmony
Turnersburg
Scotts
Yadkin
Forbush
Yadkin
Dan River
Blue Ridge Parkway
Hanging Rock St. Pk
Pilot Mountain St. Pk
Haw R.
Dan
Friendship
Lake Brandt
Lake Higgins
SURRY
STOKES
ROCKINGHAM
YADKIN
DAVIE
IREDELL
FORSYTH
GUILFORD


1. Bernice Cox Lowe
2. Gladys Addison Jessup
3. Old Westfield School Campus
4. Lena Smith
5. Westfield Post Office
6. Westfield Baptist Church
7. Roxie Payne Christian
8. Vera Cox Smith
9. R. Wayne and Ruth Jackson Smith
10. Ersie Pell McIntyre
11. Toms Creek Primitive Baptist Church
12. WVFD
13. Westfield Friends Meeting
14. Jessups Grove Baptist Church
15. New Westfield School
Scale: 1 inch = 3.5 miles
TO MT. AIRY
89
NORTH WESTFIELD TOWNSHIP
BIG CREEK TOWNSHIP
LOCUST GROVE CHURCH ROAD
ASBURY ROAD
TO FRANCISCO School
TO Nancy Reynolds Sch
660
TOMS CREEK CHURCH ROAD
RING ROAD
DEARMIN ROAD
PELL ROAD
JACKSON ROAD
BROWN MOUNTAIN ROAD
PILOT WESTFIELD ROAD
CAIN ROAD
OLD WESTFIELD ROAD
JESSUPS GROVE CHURCH ROAD
SOUTH WESTFIELD TOWNSHIP
To Pilot Mountain


To Mount Airy, NC 14 mi.
To Bernice Cox Lowe 0.5 mi.
To Gladys Addison Jessup 0. 2 mi.
A Old Agricultural Building/Old WVFD
B Westfield School Gym
C Westfield School Cafeteria
D Westfield School - Primary Building
E Westfield School - Main Building
F Westfield, NC Post Office
G Surry Telephone
H Lena Smith (Dr. Tom Smith's Home)
I Roxie Payne Christian
J Westfield Baptist Church
K Covington Home (renovated Westfield Academy)
To Vera Cox Smith 2.0 mi.
To Francisco 5 mi.
To Toms Creek Primitive Baptist Church 0.2 mi.
L Westfield Volunteer Fire Department
M Westfield Medical Center
N Westfield Friends Meeting
WESTFIELD SCHOOL CAMPUS
89
SURRY COUNTY
STOKES COUNTY
OLD WESTFIELD ROAD
BROWN MOUNTAIN ROAD
To Ersie Pell McIntyre 3.0 mi.
To Pilot Mountain 7.0 mi.
Scale: 1inch = 400 feet

APPENDIX B

MEMORABILIA

Westfield High School,

WESTFIELD, N. C.

Report of Stephen Price Lane

for Quarter ending Sept 6 1890

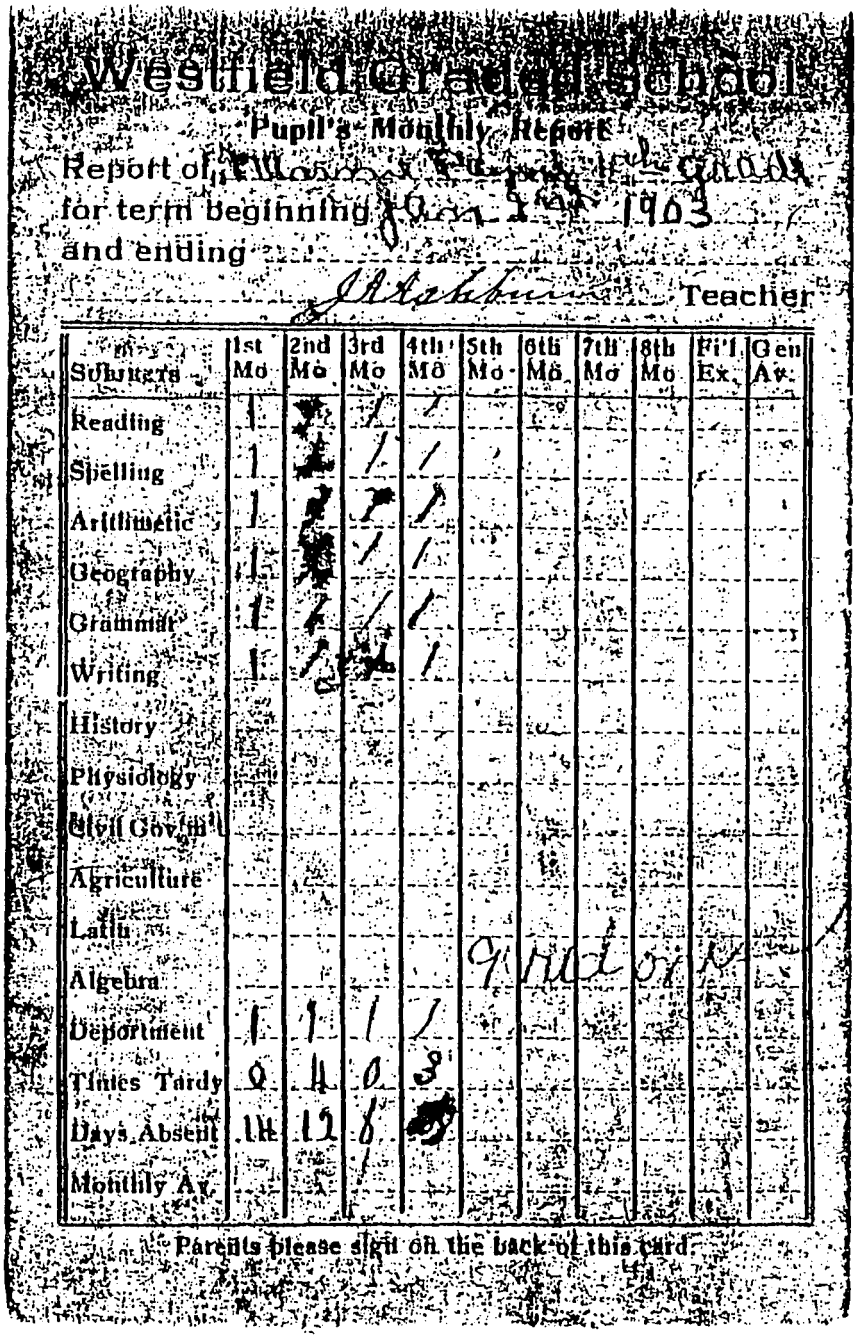
General Department Good; Tardy ..... Times.

Disorder Marks ..... ; Demerits .....

Composition,	90	Natural Philosophy,	
Spelling.	100	~~Physical~~ Geography.	96
Reading,		Astronomy,	
Penmanship.	98	Arithmetic,	96
Grammar.		Algebra,	80
Rhetoric.	90	Higher Mathematics,	
Literature.		Latin Grammar,	98
Natural History.		Latin Reader,	85
Physiology.		Book Keeping,	
History,			

From 95 to 100 is First Grade: 90 to 95, 2nd, and 80 to 90, 3rd.

J. B. SPARGER, Principal.



Westfield Graded School

Pupil's Monthly Report

Report of [illegible] Grade

for term beginning Jan 1st 1903

and ending [illegible]

[illegible] Teacher

Subjects	1st Mo	2nd Mo	3rd Mo	4th Mo	5th Mo	6th Mo	7th Mo	8th Mo	Fi'l Ex.	Gen Av.
Reading	1	1	1	1						
Spelling	1	1	1	1						
Arithmetic	1	1	1	1						
Geography	1	1	1	1						
Grammar	1	1	1	1						
Writing	1	1	1	1						
History										
Physiology										
Civil Gov't										
Agriculture										
Latin										
Algebra					Grad					
Deportment	1	1	1	1						
Times Tardy	0	4	0	3						
Days Absent	14	12	8	5						
Monthly Av.										

Parents please sign on the back of this card.

5-8-30—100M

TEACHER'S CONTRACT

(ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT)

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Surry COUNTY.

THIS AGREEMENT *Entered into between the Public School Committee of* Westfield *District,* Westfield *Township,* Westfield *School,* White *Race, on the* 6th *day of* May *1932, in accordance with sections 101, 130, and 158-171 inclusive, of the North Carolina School Law, which are hereby made a part of this contract, and* Rosie Hunter *(Name as it appears on certificate), a Teacher holding a* Grammar Grade Class *(Kind of certificate) Certificate, No.* 132681 *, which expires* September *, 1936, Witnesseth:*

That said teacher agrees to teach a Public School in said district for the current school term, said school to begin on the _____ day of _____, 193__, to discharge faithfully all the duties imposed on teachers by the Public School Law of North Carolina, and to give at least thirty days notice to the County Superintendent before terminating this contract. In consideration whereof said committee promises to pay the said teacher the sum of ($_____) State Salary rating *Dollars for each month said teacher shall teach, $_____ of which shall be paid out of county funds in accordance with the adopted county salary schedule for six months duration, and the remainder, if any, $_____ per month for the six months' term and the total monthly salary for the extended term shall be paid out of the local district funds.*

This contract is not valid until approved and signed by the County Superintendent of Public Instruction, nor for more money than accrues to the credit of the district for the fiscal year during which the contract is made, nor if the teacher does not hold certificate of class and number indicated above.

Provision for the payment of the moneys to fall due under this agreement has been made by appropriation duly made or by bonds or notes duly authorized, as required by the "County Fiscal Control Act."

_____
County Accountant.

(Signed) P. A. Jessup *Chairman.*
G. F. Folger *Secretary.*
Rosie Hunter *Teacher.*
Approved: C. S. Henderson
County Superintendent.

A COPY OF THIS CONTRACT SHOULD BE KEPT ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION. A COPY RETAINED BY THE COMMITTEE, AND A COPY PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE TEACHER.
(Teachers are urged to read sections 158-171 of the School Law, which define the duties of teachers in public schools.)

HERBERT HOOVER

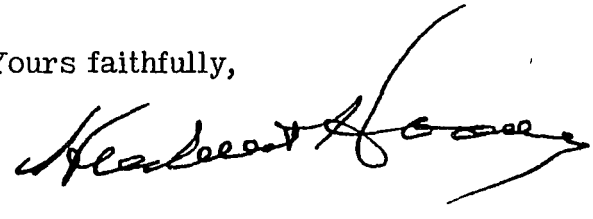
The Waldorf-Astoria Towers
New York 22, New York
May 16, 1963

Dear Mrs. Owens:

As a youngster, I heard some echoes of the Hoover and Minthorne women who went South to teach school. It is pleasant to hear about it.

I am sending some books for your school library.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. Dellie Pell Owens
Route 2
Pilot Mountain, North Carolina